

# Homer and the Prophets

or

# Homer and Now

By **Cornelia Steketee Hulst, M.A., M.P.D.**

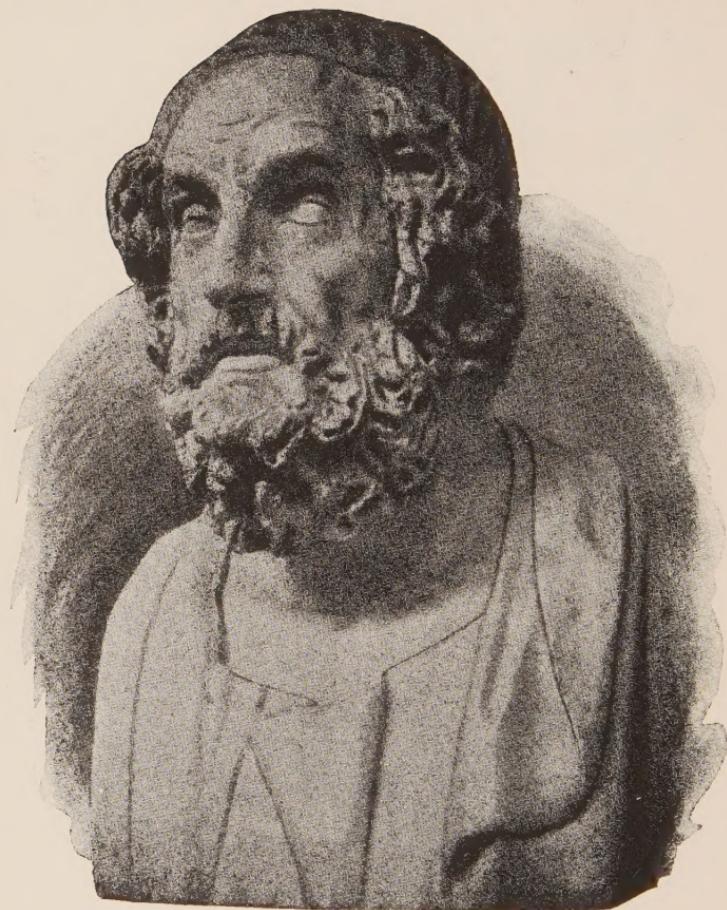






This book was sent to me by  
Mrs. Fulk herself. How much better I  
understand it now that I've grown up  
and married. But I will never forget  
hearing it from her own lips in the  
unhurried atmosphere of that island  
home of theirs.





HOMER  
Ideal Bust in the Museum at Naples

HOMER AND THE PROPHETS  
or  
HOMER AND NOW

BY

## CORNELIA STEKETEE HULST

## ILLUSTRATED

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These Essays on RELIGIOUS AND MORAL ASPECTS OF HOMER  
are dedicated  
to the Memory of DR. PAUL CARUS  
and  
to MARY HEGELE R CARUS, his wife.

In *The Open Court*, to which they devoted years of support, together they exercised a strong and constant influence to present the ancient faiths as they were in spirit and in truth, not merely in the letter, which so often kills. Many facts of importance in my study of Homer came to me through *The Open Court*, and the friendship of Dr. and Mrs. Carus added a crowning joy to this work.

MRS. HENRY HULST.

Grand Rapids, Michigan.



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## INTRODUCTORY

THIS little book of essays on Homer proceeds from a religious and moral impulse, and therein lies perhaps its chief merit and its contribution toward a better understanding of Homer, for it is Homer's religious and moral impulse that has been too little felt since he ceased to be the religious leader of his people and came to be studied as a classic writer. A bard inspired by Apollo, the Far-Darter, god of the silver arrows of retribution, Homer's primary concern was the ways of the gods to men, the rewards and the punishments that they meted. His audience, not being critical and intent on merely knowing, looked to him for inspiration, for the wisdom of life; and his nation cherished his ideals for centuries and built institutions on them, especially in the earlier ages when criticism and prose had not been attained. Homer belonged to that age when men hunted because there were dangerous beasts to be slain, and food was to be provided, not for the hunting's sake, when poetry expressed vital, religious thought, and when the artist's work was not regarded as a frill on the garment of life, for its own sake.

When criticism came, when Grecian mythology had been transcended by Christianity, when the poet of living fervor and faith had to be known, if at all, as a "classic" in a dead language, it was inevitable that his religious and moral meaning should be accounted less and his strictly literary beauty should be accounted more by scholars who studied him. Beyond question, his art is so beautiful that it merits study for its own sake. All honor to the scholars who have given their lives to the Greek, and to Homer, preserving and purifying the text, and rendering exact translations. The very arduousness of their task, its intellectual quality, and the relatively mature age at which they began their study of the poet were against their feeling his moral and religious fervor, as was also the Vergilian interpretation handed down to them as a tradition from the humanists who first introduced his study into Western Europe.

There is a kind of wisdom that is not revealed to the mature, and the learned, and the sophisticated, but to humbler and lesser folk. We readers of Homer in the original will perceive a certain order of interesting facts in the epics but adolescent readers will see, in a good translation, what, I believe, is much nearer to the spirit of Homer and to that of the audience of his time. It was no mean start toward a vital moral and religious interpretation of Homer to have read the *Odyssey* as the Greek Bible perhaps fifty times in translation with classes of lively boys and girls twelve to fourteen years old. Their interest is not the least "literary," or priggish, their attention is not divided by considerations of grammar, their opinions are not swayed by former famous critics, their judgment is not unduly influenced by that of a great body of accredited contemporary scholars.

To really rise to the epic, a genuine epic like the *Odyssey* or *Hiawatha*, a scholar must become as a little child, or have kept a good deal of the spirit of childhood, so that he can enter and live what the poet has written. Not all of us, alas, have been able to do this—and some never had a childhood to keep, but suspected Santa Claus and saw through him from the cradle, and never could forget that their dolls were stuffed with sawdust. Such make good grammarians, and good grammarians are very necessary for translation of the classics, but they will never have the power to live the story of the men and women and gods of Homer, and they never will develop a Schliemann. They never did. When the great romantic Schliemann was a mere baby he played "Capture Troy" with his father, the chairs piled up for a citadel on the kitchen floor, and when he was eight years old he had definitely decided that he would make it his life-work to dig out Troy. The *wisdom of babes* . . . ! He never had a chance to read Homer at a school or a university in his boyhood. It was a girl of thirteen who taught us the right way to read our epic, not with exaggeration, but with heightened pitch and tension, throwing herself into the story with much of the passion of the rhapsodist; and it was a boy with nothing whatever of the type of the scholar who raised the question what princess Telemachus was going to marry—we had just been discussing the double wedding at Menelaus' palace and the robe that Helen had given Telemachus for his bride to wear on her wedding-day. The daughters of Nestor and Nausicaä were then duly considered, and Nausicaä was unanimously approved for Telemachus' bride because of her character.

Another reason why Homer has not been apprehended as he was, is the reason that has also falsified much of history, i. e., he has not been studied in the light of the world of his time and his contemporaries. Homer's catalogue of armies is something of an index which shows that men and ideas had traveled far in his days. It is now generally accepted that Homer lived about 850 B. C., and that was the age when Elijah lived in the adjacent land of Israel and when the Ionian Greeks in Asia Minor began to face the very problems that Israel faced under Ahab, military invasion from the East, encroachment by the gods of the East, and loss of possessions and freedom. When we consider the epics in this connection, we find the sons of Atreus significant in a way that we did not discover when we read our Homer supposing that the poet was a mere entertainer with no opinions of note, no message of great wisdom and vital moral and religious import to his time. The question of East or West was then all important, and just as the Bible shows Ahab and his accursèd house blotted out, so Homer is now seen to present the sons of Atreus *ἀτρηπός, doomed, on the way to ruin*. A study of parallels between the Bible and Homer will now yield rich results in a deepened interpretation.

The myths of the Greeks are fascinating even when studied as products of mere fancy; when we study them for their truth, religious truth in allegorical form, they yield a high moral beauty and an inspiration of a high kind. Unfortunately, it has been easier to see the fancy than to interpret the allegory, and a just apprehension is doubly difficult to us because Grecian names have been not translated but merely transliterated—for the names are the key to the meaning. It seems to be certain that the Greeks themselves took the myths too literally and that in classic times even Plato lost his way in them, for the myths of which Plato wrote had not the Homeric meaning. Myths in his day were doubtless as bad as he judged them, but those of Homer were good, and will always be true. The Zeus of Homer, though humanized to bring him within men's comprehension, was wise, just, and good in the main, the father of Wisdom and Justice; the Zeus whom Aeschylus pictured, in Plato's time, had become a small-minded tyrant whom Plato would condemn and whom Aeschylus moved his audience to dishonor in favor of Prometheus, the good Titan who endured torture at the hands of that tyrant Zeus to save the world of men. When this stage had been reached the value of the religious Grecian myths was largely in the past, and the Athenian people were ready to rise to

a higher religion that embodied the new conceptions. They did so when Christianity shortly rose.

In the days of Homer, Greece was a frontier land of the West, the Greece of the peninsula being protected from the conquering East by a narrow but sufficient body of water and by comparative poverty in earthly possessions. Her happy lot was isolation and opportunity for self-development, while neighboring nations on the mainland bordering the Mediterranean were being conquered by a succession of Babylonians, Assyrians, Medes, and Persians. The Ionian Greeks, of whom Homer was one, were on the mainland and in danger of conquest but had the advantage of lying remote and behind a buffer state.

But though the people of the Hellenic peninsulas and islands were unconquered, they were not stagnant within their own narrow boundaries and unrelated to the great outlying world of thought and action in their day, for they had ships and sailed them far, to rich Egypt and the northwestern coast of Africa, to the shores of Asia Minor and the Black Sea, to Sicily and the Italian mainland, and to the far, dread coast of Spain. Grecian sailors had even looked upon the Ocean Stream beyond the Pillars of Hercules.

Homer mentions many lands and nations, and from these we may form some conclusion as to the influences from abroad that were acting upon the Hellenic people. They knew Egypt: would they adopt her system of land and priestcraft, counting the people as nothing, but Pharaohs and priests as all? They knew the East: would they adopt her political system and honor kings as gods, to be approached in abject posture and given the right of life or death over the subjects? Would they adopt the obscene goddess Astarte (Ashtaroth, Aphrodite) along with her lover Tammuz (Adonis)? Would they adopt the harem? If we read our Homer with these questions in mind, we shall find much that has not been found by reading without attention to what were the tendencies outside of Greece in his time.

A neighbor nearer to Greece than the East or Egypt, which were the great empires then striving for mastery, was Palestine. Lying at the crossing point of the roads that connected the East, the North, and the South, the children of Israel, by virtue of their position, received the ideas of all of the ancient world, not only through their constant contact with traders and frequent wars, but through intermarriage. Their national traditions, in their sacred books, make it clear that in them the blood of the East, the South, and the North was mingled, for the Patriarchs came from Ur of

the Chaldees; an Egyptian strain was added during the sojourn in Egypt; and a Northern strain when they took to themselves women of the native tribes, when they conquered the Promised Land—Moabites and Ammonites and Hittites, all Nordic according to modern scholars. We know now that the Homeric Greeks also were Nordic, and in both Israel and Greece physical proof of the Nordic origin is found in the blue eyes and golden hair of individuals, along with proof in ideas and customs held in common. King David and Achilles, the goddess Athene and the god Apollo were of those who showed the Nordic signs.

From bitter experience in early wanderings, from the sojourn in Egypt, and the Babylonian Captivity, Israel attained an early conception of human liberty, and in the fires of her afflictions she came to transcend all other nations in her religious life. She has well been called a Martyr Nation and the Crucible of God. Religiously, she rose to monotheism and gave the world its religion; politically, she was a theocratic democracy at the time when Troy was sacked by the Greeks, with laws which protected the weak against the strong and with prophets who denounced wrongdoing in high places—the very opposite from Babylon, who was drunk with the wine of her power. The laws of Babylon decreed death to the person who gave refuge to a slave, but in Israel that refuge was commanded: "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the slave which has escaped from his master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best. Thou shalt not oppress him." (Deut. xxiii, 15, 16.) In Homer, what is the practice with regard to suppliants and slaves?

Between 1400 B. C. and 1100 B. C. Israel suffered military defeat six times and came to ascribe her sorrows to the evil that she had permitted to exist, especially to her abandoning her service of her God of Righteousness for the service of "false gods of the nations round about," as Baal, and Tammuz, and Ashtaroth, the Ares, Adonis, and Aphrodite of the Eastern nations. The date of the fall of Troy was within this period, being 1184 B. C. according to Grecian tradition. Did the Greeks also see in personal and national sufferings the hand of a righteous god? Israel had risen to monotheism and her prophets were struggling to keep her faith pure, but her wives and maidens were weeping for Tammuz and Ashtaroth—did the highest moral and religious leaders of the Grecian world also struggle against this debasing cult of the East? The people of Israel had not bowed to native kings since their escape

from Egyptian bondage, but chose to live under the rule of their judges, from Moses to the accession of Saul (1451 B.C.—1095 B.C.)—did the Homeric Greeks show any tendencies against monarchy and toward democracy, under the rule of judges? Are the people whom Homer pictured, the best of them, an-hungered and a-thirst for righteousness and worshippers of gods of righteousness, or are they hedonists, bent on mere pleasure and regardless of the rights and the wrongs involved in attaining their ends?

We know from authentic history the answer to most of these questions as among the historic Greeks. They abolished their kings, and that soon after Homer's time, which was approximately eight hundred years before the Christian era; in Athens they developed a State under the rule of judges, called archons, and under Solon established a democracy more wise and more just than any the world has seen since, if we take into account only the body of citizens, or free men, for Athens had slaves as all other States of the ancient world had them. A visitor from Mars might find Athenian slaves not much worse off than laborers of certain modern industrial classes are. The Code of Solon, without further evidence, would argue that Homer's system made for righteousness in public as well as in private life—for it was Homer's myths that supplied the ideals of Solon and the Golden Age. This in general, and pragmatically; a study of particulars, characters, and incidents in the epics makes for the same conclusion.

Quotations from Homer used in these essays are to be credited to the translation of the *Odyssey* by Palmer, and to the translation of the *Iliad* by Lang, Leaf, and Myers.

C. S. H.

Our Island, 1924.





# Homer and the Prophets

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## CHAPTER I

### APPRECIATION

PERHAPS the best approach to Homer today is by means of the "movie," at least, a young university scholar who has seen the film of the *Odyssey* tells me what would argue this happy conclusion. He says that it is a "thriller" of the first order, and that when it was given in his university town, it attracted large and increasing crowds of townsfolk and students before its run of a week was over, not at all because it was "scholarly stuff," and "highbrow," but because it has a strong human appeal. Its action rushes along carrying spectators with it though new to the story and foreign to Greek traditions. Even the gods and fabulous monsters seem real, because they are seen with the physical eye—in this respect the new art of the moving picture is at an advantage as compared with the ancient art of the bard, though bards acted the parts as they sang them. Miraculously, in a mist, a god can appear, and then vanish miraculously.

A great improvement, this, of attending a "movie," instead of thumbing a dictionary and grammar laboriously, pondering roots and points of construction as the means of approach to the story. Every move of the thumb, every act of acquiring knowledge, every judgment passed distracts the reader's attention from characters and situations so that he cannot realize them intensely. If he is to get the full effect of the story when a "movie" is not available, a dramatic reading will be the next best approach, with an epic pitch and tension. Those who have had the good fortune to hear Professor Clarke's dramatic reading of "The Descent into Hades," will realize much of the human appeal of the *Odyssey*. Two small boys whom I took to hear it sat congealed during the reading and agreed later that this was the greatest "show" that they had ever seen.

It would not be possible for spectators and hearers to remain unmoved by the epic hero of Homer if they realized his character and situation. He is bayed about by a large band of desperate conspirators who threaten his life, and his wife; he is endangered at

every turn by alluring sorceresses and monsters; and false and hostile gods block his way when he tries to return home after the war. But friends and righteous gods rise up to help him, and Wisdom, personified as the goddess Athene, gives him guidance and pleads his cause, in Olympus, on earth, even down in Hades, whither he has to go to learn all that a mortal may know. It is a thrilling sight to see him go down and learn it.

As a background and foil to Homer's great hero, strange and horrible monsters appear, as man-eating Polyphemus, a terrible one-eyed giant. The enchantress Circe changes her victims to swine by means of a magic drink; two evil water spirits, Scylla and Charybdis, half women and half snakes, wreck sailors on the rocks and in the whirlpool; alluring Sirens charm men to destruction with their beauty and their songs. These, out of many, are strange and horrible enough, and Odysseus escapes from them all by moral strength, courage, resolution, and craft; but stranger and more horrible are those whom he meets in the Lower World. There the dead are not men, but pale shadows without substance, as he learns when he tries to embrace his own mother, whom he finds among them, she having died since he left home. Pale shadows are his companions who died in the war or since, and they weakly and pathetically complain of the wrongs they have had to endure. Others are suffering penance for the sins they committed when they were alive, as Sisyphus, who rolls a great rock forever up a hill, for when he gets it nearly to the top it rolls down and he has to do his work all over again—a good allegory of the life that men lead, forever rolling stones up an incline, but never reaching the top. Near him, Tantalus is forever thirsty because the water that rises almost to his lips is siphoned out of his cup just before he is able to drink it—again an allegory, of us poor thirsty mortals who see the waters of our hopes recede just when we expect to drink our desire. Tityus is tortured by an eagle, which comes every day to tear his liver out as fast as it grows again—we say that our *heart is torn*, meaning the same.

On earth, the human characters range from very villainous villains, the Suitors, who are plotting dishonor and death for the hero, to the hero and heroine, Odysseus and his Penelope, who are almost too good to be true. In the background lie dark tragedies of the house of Atreus, a house *baneful and driven to ruin*, as its name, derived from *ἀτηπός*, signifies. Will the house of Odysseus go down in tragedy as dark? Can Odysseus arrive in time to save his wife

from the Suitors? And will he be able to hold his own against such odds if he does?

The first scene is laid in heaven, where the righteous gods are discussing the fate of Odysseus and decide to help him to return. This foreknowledge does much to sustain us through the many harrowing scenes that follow, which might be too harrowing to simple-minded hearers. The next scene shows Odysseus' home, where his steadfast wife is weeping and praying for his return and his handsome young son, Telemachus, the image of his father, except that he is young and tall, is dreaming apart about the day of his father's return. The Suitors are lying around, leading their customary vicious life, gambling, drinking wine, talking unwisely, and doing nothing useful. Now the goddess of Wisdom appears, in the guise of a middle-aged man who was Odysseus' friend. Telemachus welcomes her and cares for her comfort in every way with extreme politeness, and accepts gratefully her wise advice that he shall no longer remain inactive like a boy, but rouse himself to act like a man. From this moment he deserves the epithet that Homer gives him, *discreet*, and his name, *Telemachus*, which signifies *Perfect Warrior* (from *τέλεος* and *μάχομαι*). To the joy of his mother and the confusion of the Suitors, he announces his majority, orders the Suitors to leave, calls the gods to bear witness and to give him help against them should they refuse, calls an assembly of the people, makes his charges before them, and announces his purpose to go in search of his father. This is not starting a battle, but a campaign. Every word and act is wise, and will win the approval of wise Odysseus on his return.

The many scenes in which Odysseus meets his trials are varied and effective, laid on enchanted islands, at the fireside, in a swine-herd's cottage, in a palace, out at sea. The scene of his shipwreck, where the winds and the waves toss his frail raft about until it sinks—he is saved by a kind sea-nymph who lends him her wimple for a life-preserver—is followed by a charming idyllic scene on the shore of an inland rivulet where a young princess, Nausicaä, is washing the family clothes in company with her maidens. They have finished trampling them in the washing-pool and have spread them out on the sand to dry, and now they have refreshed themselves from the baskets that they brought with them and are playing a game of ball, when Odysseus appears before them, a shipwrecked stranger, unclothed except for a broken bough of a tree, which he holds before him in lieu of a figleaf apron. A sorry plight for a world-hero!

Athene befriend him and Apollo inspire him, so that he can win the young Princess to take up his cause!

They do befriend him. A marvellous grace is shed about him and words of wisdom flow from his lips. The Princess listens, encouraged by Athene, and is persuaded to give him some of her brothers' beautiful clothes, along with sage advice as to how he can reach her mother, Queen Virtue, and win her heart to his cause. Under the guidance of Wisdom, the princess Nausicaä, who had turned like a child to flee at sight of the stranger, takes the part of a perfect woman. As Telemachus is the model for all Greek boys, so Nausicaä is for the girls. She meets a difficult situation with perfect success. She is maidenly, modest, gentle, affectionate (she calls the King, her father, "Papa, dear"), brave, kindly, courteous, helpful, generous, prudent, wise—we might name all of the virtues for women and show that she was possessed of them all from evidence in the text. A princess, but not above doing the family washing! Such should all maidens be! Telemachus will doubtless marry her, and their house will be, through them, the happiest ever, protected by the righteous gods to the happiest of conclusions—nothing *baneful, driven to ruin* there!

It begins to be clear why the Greeks made their Homer the foundation book for the education of their young. Their best ideals were here, implicit in characters and situations, possibly more effective, certainly more attractive, than if they had been set forth in didactic form. Not only Odysseus and Penelope, but this mere youth and maiden, "follow Wisdom like a guiding star," an inspiration for others also to summon resolution and endure to victory. In his heroes and heroines, Homer holds forth a promise of honor and reward for following Wisdom as clearly as did the Preacher of Israel, in Proverbs, when he says:

Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom.

Exalt her and she shall promote thee; she shall bring thee to honor when thou dost embrace her.

Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many.

Enter not into the path of the wicked and go not in the way of evil men, For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence.

It is thus that his wise and good mother must have talked to Telemachus.

"The wicked" and the "evil men" in the *Odyssey* are the Suitors, who were "eating the bread of wickedness and drinking the wine of

violence" at the palace of Odysseus while they wooed his wife during his absence after the Trojan War.

Involuntarily the question rises when we see the perfect accord in Grecian and Israelitish ideals: Did Homer's epics inspire the writer of the Proverbs? Did the writer of the Proverbs inspire Homer to write his epics? Nice questions of priority and influence as between Homer and the sacred books of Israel are not for us, but we shall count it sufficient to see that Homer and the writers of the sacred books of Israel are in accord in the praise of wisdom, rewards for wisdom, and punishment for evil.

The same questions rise as to the *Works and Days* of Hesiod, which is assigned by scholars to the period of Homer, ±800 B. C., and which, like Proverbs, was didactic in its purpose. The main themes presented in Proverbs and *Works and Days* are *right social relations, work, and piety*, these in the form of exhortations, or injunctions to be kind to the stranger and the suppliant, to be just to the fatherless, to respect another man's property, to regard another's bed . . . and these are the very themes that Homer presented in narrative form. After the great teachers come preachers and commentators. What is implicit in Homer becomes explicit in *Works and Days* and Proverbs. Odysseus was a *stranger and suppliant* at the palace of Alcinoüs and the cottage of the Swineherd, who treated him kindly, and afterwards at his own palace, where the Suitors treated him ill; the depraved Suitors scorned to do honest *work* to maintain themselves, but quartered themselves on Telemachus and devoured his substance, he being then practically *fatherless*, while they threatened to force his mother to choose one of them in *marriage*, though if she had consented she would have been considered guilty of violating her *husband's bed*; for it was the law of Babylon, and doubtless throughout the East, that if a man failed to return from a war, perhaps because he was held as a slave in some foreign land, his wife must stay true to him in case he left property sufficient for her support. If she were unprovided, she was free to marry again. Unlike the Suitors, all who are good in Homer's stories are *workers*, even the queens and princesses are busy, spinning and weaving cloth, and washing the clothes. In the end, all who do evil in any form are punished: "Finally Zeus imposes dear requital for the wicked man's unjust deeds," says Hesiod, and this a most careful scrutiny of characters and incidents in Homer proves true.

It need not surprise us that this most artistic of story-tellers has perfect retribution, or poetic justice in all of his stories, for early,

unsophisticated ages, like that to which he belonged, love a moral, as unsophisticated children do. As late as the period of Solon, didactic poetry was loved in Athens, and Solon won much of his influence in the city by the didactic verses that he wrote. It seems to be the mark of a degenerate age to rate low the didactic and the moral in works of art, but to care overmuch for manner and method. As to Homer, a person bent on sermonizing could get as many texts for sermons from his writings as he could from *Works and Days*, or from Proverbs—of course, Homer does not preach them.

In general, the basic idea of Homer's poems is that men and nations, nay, even gods, are punished when they do wrong. So the hundreds of wicked Suitors who abused the hospitality and wooed the virtuous wife of Odysseus when he was away after the war suffered death as a just retribution at his hands when he came home; so Prince Paris of Troy, who led Queen Helen astray when he was a trusted guest in the home of her husband, King Menelaus, suffered final defeat and death in the course of the Trojan War, which resulted from his act; so Priam, the aged king of Troy, along with all of his family and his nation, went down to utter destruction because they unwisely protected the guilty pair in Troy instead of punishing them, their city burned to the ground, their women enslaved; so Aphrodite, though a goddess, met humiliation and defeat at the hands of the righteous gods because she misguided these mortals and tried to protect them with the aid of War, Ares, her own false, secret lover. Against these false gods, (1) Zeus fought because he protects the rights of hosts, of guests, and of nations; (2) Athene fought because she protects the wise and must punish the foolish; (3) Hera fought because she guards the hearth and home; and (4) Apollo fought because he does poetic justice and sends retribution, and because he had warned Priam by prophets not to protect Paris in Troy.

Let us examine closely the conduct of Priam and the Trojans to see just who were guilty, that the righteous gods visited all with doom. When Paris broke the law of the righteous gods by leading away another man's wife (his name is derived from *παριεῖν*, *I sleep beside*, the term used for committing adultery), the Trojans were morally bound to punish him, to drown him in the river if they followed the law of Babylon, to stone him to death if they followed the law of their near-neighbor, Israel, at least to expel him from the city, if they followed the warning sent them by Apollo before Paris committed his crime. Priam showed perfect willingness to obey the god at first, and sent Paris out of the city, but later

he weakened, and admitted him when he came to Troy leading Helen, the Shining One, by the hand. The derivation of these names makes our assurance doubly sure in the interpretation. As *Paris* is derived from the term for committing adultery, so *Helen* is derived from a root cognate with that in *Helios*, the Sun, and it puns upon the infinitive meaning *to lead by the hand, to seduce*, (*αἱρέω, ἔλειν*), a fact which explains the ancient vase-paintings, where Helen and Paris are represented as *hand in hand*. Homer calls Paris also by the name *Alexander*, a contraction of the Greek, *I am defended of men* (*ἀλέξω* and *ἀνθρώπος*), a name which is a reproach to both Paris and those who defended him, for this defense of the guilty was an exceedingly grave offense in the eyes of the righteous gods, as it was to Jehovah in Israel, to be punished with destruction of the city. In his innocent life as a shepherd Paris *defended men*.

In the sacred books of Israel many instances are given of cities destroyed for harboring this sin of Paris, or others like it. Among these was Israel herself when she turned from the worship of the God of the fathers to Ashtaroth, an Eastern "false goddess," parallel with Aphrodite, as is told in Judges ii, 14, 15.

And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.

Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said and the Lord had sworn unto them, and they were greatly distressed.

This punishment of Israel was earlier than the fall of Troy, and other still earlier parallel incidents are told in the Bible, in which cities conquered by Israel were punished because they also had been guilty of this law. Such parallels are shown in Lev. xviii:

(1) And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying,

(2) Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, I am the Lord thy God.

(3) After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. . . .

(20) Thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbor's wife, to defile thyself with her. . . .

(24) Defile not ye yourselves with any of these things, for in all of these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you.

(25) And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit its iniquities upon it, and the land herself vomiteth forth her inhabitants.

A still further example of punishment inflicted upon a city for a sin very like that of Troy, is the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah:

And lo, the smoke of the country went up like the smoke of a furnace.

The cities destroyed for their wickedness, especially Sodom and Gomorrah, became “a proverb and a by-word” in Israel, as did Troy among the Greeks, therein receiving the curse for disobedience pronounced upon breakers of the law in Deut. xviii:

Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations.

If, on the contrary, they had obeyed the law, they would have received the blessings for obedience promised:

And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of thee.

Here we are again struck by the fact that Homer and the ancient Greeks were in perfect accord with the Prophets and writers of the sacred books on this important question of morals, both holding the conviction that a city giving obedience to God’s law will receive a blessing, as a city disobeying will receive his curse. *Athens*, named in honor of *Athene*, is an example of a city *called by the name of the Lord* and confident of power in any righteous cause; *Troy* is an example of a city *called by the name of an evil one* and weak against its enemies, being the name of the hated winter dragon and his lair, or labyrinth, who imprisons the Princess of the Sun every year until the assaults of the Spring set her free. Of this we shall have occasion to speak more fully later. Throughout the ancient world this myth of a hated labyrinth destroyed was told, and celebrated in spring festivals, so it might well be taken by a bard to supply a moral background for his story of a city punished for its sin.

Was King Priam alone guilty of bringing destruction on Troy? Were the brothers of Paris guilty? Were the Counsellors? Were the young warriors? Were the women? It is marvellous how conclusively the poet gives answer to these questions in what he tells in the famous scene at the Scaean Gate, where Paris meets Menelaus in single combat on the plain below, while Priam, Helen, and the old Counsellors watch from the walls.

(1) The aged Counsellors bore tribute to Helen’s exceeding fairness, though at the same time they condemned her:

Now when they saw Helen coming to the Tower they softly spake winged words one to the other, "Small blame it is that Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans should for such a woman long time suffer hardships; marvellously like is she to the immortal goddesses to look upon. Yet even so, though she be so goodly, let her go upon their ships and not stay to vex us and our children after us."

Blaming her, though lightly, and not guilty of wanting to protect her in their city, they are still guilty of not raising their voices actively in council for the death or expulsion of Paris and Helen from the city according to the warning of Apollo and the law. There are ways of putting pressure on a king, as the scenes representing councils show, and they might use them, so they must be held guilty of the destruction which follows.

(2) The sentiment among the people in Troy was against Paris and Helen and they would willingly have betrayed Paris to Menelaus:

They surely in no wise hid him from kindness, could any have seen him, for he was hated of all even as black death.

It will be noted that the people were the soundest of head among those in Troy. But they remained inactive against Paris.

(3) The rank and file of warriors in Troy were willing to see the wrongdoer punished, for before the combat began they prayed thus:

"Father Zeus, that rulest from Ida, most glorious, most great, whichever it be that brought this trouble upon both peoples, vouchsafe that he may die and enter the House of Hades, that so for us peace may be assured and trusty oaths."

But they made no active effort to fix the guilt or to inflict punishment upon the guilty persons, so they also were not guiltless of the destruction of their city.

(4) This is particularly true of Hector, the oldest of the king's sons, the natural leader of the young men of the city, whom they love. In the powerful speech that Hector makes to Paris before the combat, he heaps reproach and scorn upon him for bringing Helen to Troy:

"Evil Paris, most fair in semblance, thou deceiver, woman-mad, would thou hadst been unborn or died unwed. . . . It would be better far than thus to be our shame and looked at askance of all men . . . to bring back a fair woman from a far country . . . that she might be a sore mischief to thy father and city and all the realm, but to our foes a rejoicing, and to thyself a hanging of the head! . . . Thy lyre will not avail thee, nor the gifts of Aphrodite, those locks and thy fair favor, when thou grovellest in the dust. But the Trojans are very cowards, else long ere this hadst thou donned a robe of stone for all the ill thou hast wrought."

So sternly an Israelite might speak, imposing the penalty of the law, *a robe of stone*, that is, *the death by stoning*. The last sentence especially has bitter significance.

Accusing the Trojans of being cowards for not stoning Paris, does not Hector here include himself? Since he was the daily witness of the crime, and the leader of the people, he must feel that he should have led in the stoning. Being a true and a brave man, since he has failed in his duty he must admit the truth that he has been a physical coward, afraid to face Achilles in arms, and a moral coward, afraid to face his father in protest when he is doing a wrong that will wreck the city. Priam has been a kind father, but this son must feel that now the one hope of the city is in his opposing his father, and, if that should be necessary, of deposing him from his throne. In the days of the Patriarchs of the Oldest Dispensation, it had been a son's duty to obey his father unquestioningly, but this speech shows that in Hector's mind his sense of duty to his father and king is now in conflict with his sense of duty to his fatherland. It is for him to save Troy, or to bear the gods' retribution when the city falls, when his white-haired mother, his wife, and his child, will be led away into slavery as a consequence of his father's foolish doting. If Hector should call in the name of the law and the righteous gods of their fathers, the young men would rise with him and purify the city, perhaps they have even invited him to it, for they call his little son *Astyanax, King of the City* (ἀστρυ and ἀνάξ), though the name that he had given the child was *Scamander*, after the name of the river at Troy.

Mistakenly, Hector decides to obey his father and to fight for him in the cause that he judges wrong. His decision is not ignoble, and for his nobility of spirit Apollo still loves him and does a great deal to assist him. Prolonging the war as a just punishment upon Agamemnon, the god still gives Hector a chance to distinguish himself and win fame which will never die; and he lets Hector fall before that last dark day when the city falls, when his aged father will die by violence and the women he loves will be driven forth. Even Hector's pitiful death, when Wisdom has betrayed him, and the violence done his dead body after Achilles has killed him, are a gift of Apollo, to make Hector a noble "song in the ears of men" . . . and a warning.

The moral truth that a son must set himself against his father and his brothers when they are wrong, is implicit in Homer's character of Hector. Three centuries later the theme of a son in conflict with his father and his brothers was dramatized on the Athenian

religious stage in the myth of Prometheus, where the hero will not help his father and brothers do wrong and is made to endure a kind of crucifixion because he will not yield. This is what Hector should have done, and if he had done it, he would have found himself a victor, even suffering crucifixion. The martyr's death would not have been so cruel to him as any death which he must suffer in Troy, self-condemned. But this light had not broken on him, and it was more than a thousand years after Troy fell before the teaching that a son must rise against his father was not only made explicit, but put in the form of the strongest command, when Jesus said:

I am come to set a man at variance with his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me is not worthy of me.

He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

That sermon might well have been written to cover the case of Trojan Hector, for his love of his father and mother, his wife and his son led him to do what he knew was wrong; it also covers the case of his sister Cassandra, who denounced Paris, inspired by Apollo to do so, and thus set herself against her father and mother; it also covers the case of Andromache, the Queen's daughter-in-law, who agreed with Hector as to the guilt of Paris, whom his parents would not expel; it also covers the case of King Priam, the father who loved his son Paris so well that he defended him knowing that he was wrong. Did the Supreme Teacher have Troy in mind when he spoke these truths, and the sword that should have been drawn within the city, to save it? He spoke to a Hellenic world, and under Hellenic influence, whose greatest masterpieces in poetry and drama dealt with the Trojan War. "I come not to bring peace but a sword"—not unity, but division would have saved Troy, and divine wisdom has it, even in Homer by implication, that victory could come only by giving up the defense of what was wrong.

Priam himself was also divided against himself as to defending Paris, as we have said, having first expelled him and then admitted him with Helen. In the speech that he makes to Helen at the Scaean Gate, he is shown still divided against himself, for he clearly admits that she was wrong, but lays the blame for what she did on the gods:

"Come hither, dear child, and sit before me, that thou mayest see thy former husband and thy kinsfolk and thy friends. I hold not thee to blame; nay, I hold the gods to blame who brought on me the dolorous war."

This is sophistical, and Homer does not agree with Priam, for in the first scene of the *Odyssey* he represents Zeus himself as denying that the gods are to blame for evil, and stating that evildoers must bear the blame themselves since the gods have given them laws and even special warnings by prophecy. He uses the case of Aegisthus as an example, who also was guilty of adultery and had been punished by the just gods for it. The speech of Priam blaming the gods would be blasphemous if he realized it, at the least it is pathetic, and the retribution sent upon him is certainly sufficient—the death of many of his sons before his eyes in battle, including noble Hector, for sheltering one evil son in his crime. With tender pity the poet tells of the gray-haired father humbled to beg the mutilated body of his son Hector from the victor—even Zeus feels pity then and sends Iris down to command Achilles, under severest penalty, to be merciful to the poor old man.

And Helen . . . how human and appealing Homer made her without for a moment blinking her crime, or condoning it! When Hector taunted Paris, it will be remembered he referred to Helen as "a fair woman from a far country," "a sore mischief to thy father and city and all the realm, to our foes a rejoicing, and to thyself a hanging of the head," and we know that he was more merciful in his treatment of her than the other members of the King's family, except Priam himself. So Helen's life in Troy had been like that of the "strange woman" of Prov. v, "as bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword."

When Homer first shows Helen at the Scaean Gate, where she watches the battle with Priam, she has learned from bitter experiences to be very humble and very apologetic. She is no haughty beauty, but very gentle, and she has formed the habit of self-accusation. Speaking to Priam, she refers to herself as "shameless me"; she calls herself "worthless me" when she talks of herself to Telemachus, in the *Odyssey*, in the presence of Menelaus and the party of wedding-guests. And nobody, excepting doting Priam, seems to gainsay her. On her part, this may be artful and intended to disarm her critics and forestall them, but how sad a consciousness and a subconsciousness her words reveal!

All of the incidents in which Helen appears show scorpions in her mind, as that in which Hector is urging Paris to enter the combat with Menelaus. She says:

"My brother, even mine that am a dog, mischievous and abominable, would that on the day when my mother bare me an evil storm-wind had caught me away to a mountain or a billow of the loud-sounding sea, when the billow had swept me away before all these things came to pass. . . . But now, my brother, enter in and sit here upon this seat, since thy heart hath been troubled chiefly for my sake, that am a dog, and for Alexander's, on whom Zeus bringeth evil doom, that in days to come we may be a song in the ears of men."

Hector refuses her pathetic appeal and invitation:

"Do not bid me sit, Helen; thou wilt not persuade me of thy love."

It will be remembered that he condemned her to Paris by calling her "a shame and a hanging of the head." If she had invited any of his brothers, the answer would have been worse than curt and cold, as we see from what Helen says brokenly at the bier of Hector, in her lament,

"Hector, of all my brethren far dearest to my heart! Truly my lord is godlike Alexandros who brought me to Troyland—would I had died ere then. . . . Never yet heard I evil or despiteful word from thee; nay, if any other haply upbraided me in the palace halls, whether brother or sister of thine, or brother's fair-robed wife, or thy mother . . . then would thou soothe such and refrain them by the gentleness of thy spirit and by thy gentle words. . . . No more is any left in wide Troyland to be my friend and kind to me, but all men shudder at me."

Her speeches reveal gulps of suffering and despair. She despises and hates herself and, what is worse, she despises and hates Paris, and struggles to break the bonds by which Aphrodite commands her to return to him. Helen speaks wild, rebellious words to the goddess then:

"Strange Queen, why art thou desirous now to beguile me? . . . Thou comest hither with guileful intent. Go thou and sit thou by his side, and depart from the ways of the gods; neither let thy feet ever bear thee back to Olympus, but still be vexed for his sake and guard him till he make thee his wife, or perchance his slave. But thither will I not go—to array the bed of him; all the women of Troy will blame me hereafter; and I have griefs untold within my soul."

Here are glimpses of untold griefs: that she had departed from the ways of the gods and broken from the ways of her own home people, that her feet never bore her back to her childhood home, that she had doubted Paris' keeping his promise to make her his wife, that she had felt only his slave, that she had no friend among the women of Troy, only shudderings among strangers and griefs in her own soul.

She has come to judge Paris inferior to even Menelaus, as she tells him to his face after his combat:

"Thou comest back from the battle; would thou hadst perished there, vanquished by that great warrior that was my former husband. Verily, it was once thy boast that thou wast a better man than Menelaus dear to Ares, in the might of thy arm and thy spear. Nay, I, even I . . . bid thee not to attack him recklessly lest perchance thou fall on his spear."

This, for his physical cowardice; to Hector she shows that she understands the evil of his heart:

"Would that I had been wedded with a better man, who felt dishonor and the many reproaches of men. As for him, he has no sound heart now, nor will he ever have."

Her ideals are not bad, and she is not a light woman as has been generally supposed. Her husband was not lovable, and she made the tragic mistake, like Guinevere, of giving her love to a less noble man supposing that he was nobler. If she had been wedded to a man like Odysseus, or like Hector, she might not have been tempted to leave him for a man like this Paris. As it is, the Apple of Love with which Aphrodite tempted her has turned out to be that Apple of Sodom, fair to the eye, but ashes and dust on the tongue. Poor Helen!

Helen of Troy led a darkly tragic life even when Paris and Priam lived, and it continued to be darkly tragic. After Paris was killed, following Hector, it is told that Helen was given in marriage to Deiphobus. With him she must have been even less happy than with Paris, for Aphrodite had not moved her to love him, and marriage with him would not soften the judgment against her in Troy.

Poor Helen! When Troy fell and Menelaus carried her back to Sparta instead of subjecting her to the penalty of the law, she was never to be happy there. Perhaps his motive in letting her live was, as has been suggested, a hope he harbored of attaining eternal life through her, for she was of the immortals, being a sister of Castor and Pollux—his words in the *Odyssey* make this theory probable; perhaps, as has been suggested, his hope of keeping Helen's regal dowry was contingent on his keeping her. At any rate, his motive cannot have been love. He had never shown that he loved her, and incidents told of him make it certain that he could not have won her love, or even commanded her respect. He had drawn her by a lot, then he had tried to get out of marrying her because he was afraid other suitors might make him trouble if he did marry her, and he finally made her his wife only when his companion kings promised that they would stand by him if trouble should come of the marriage—what a contrast to kingly Odysseus, who stood ready to

protect his wife single-handed against hundreds of hostile suitors! Helen must have realized that her marriage with Menelaus was far from perfect, and far from sacred. Under such conditions, it is not very surprising that when Prince Charming came, with fair locks and fair favor, and offering her the golden Apple of Love, she was strongly tempted to give him her hand, unwise though this conduct might be.

How wretched the life of Helen was after Menelaus brought her back to Sparta is shown in the scene at their hearth when Telemachus visits them. She is evidently trying to make the best of her husband, paying him compliments as "a man who lacks for nothing, either in mind or person," and telling other pitiful lies with a show of devotion, while she abases herself by calling herself "worthless me." She pretends that when her heart had turned back to him before Troy fell she gave aid to the Greeks who came into the city as spies, so making herself a traitor to Troy for his sake. But Menelaus shows that he does not believe her story and follows it at once with an incident which would prove that she was, instead, actively treacherous to him and the other Grecian chieftains, and tried to betray them to their enemies to the last day that they were in Troy. The incident is this: When the Greeks lay concealed in the Wooden Horse and within the walls of Troy, Helen came alongside the horse, followed by "godlike Deiphobus," her third husband, and spoke each chieftain's name, in turn, mimicking the voice of his wife, trying to get the Greeks to answer and so betray them into the hands of their foes. In telling this incident, Menelaus addresses Helen as "wife," and the manner of his retort seems courteous, but this is only the more cutting, an example of withering irony. Was the incident that he told true? It has the earmarks of being invented, a lie to outmatch her lie, a stab into her heart, a blow in her face. She makes no denial or explanation, but takes his browbeating silently, gently bidding the maids prepare the couches for the night. Verily, in her soul she carried "grieves untold"!

Homer is very just to Helen, possibly generous in giving her such a husband, for he makes her conduct seem natural, at least, where he might have made it seem simply revolting. So Aeschylus, also, in the *Agamemnon*, makes that of Clytemnestra, by showing the very unlovely husband she had. In this, the poets both seem to be saying, "Given such husbands, the wives will be tempted, so: Moral, for husbands as well as for wives."

Poor Helen! Her soul was to suffer increasingly until the end—like that of the "strange woman" in Prov. v, her parallel:

Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.

Euripides shows Helen's own father refusing to give her protection and the common people hating her so that she dares not show her face on the streets for fear they will do her violence, but ventures forth only at night and veiled. Her legend tells that finally, after her unhappy life with Menelaus, she suffered a horrible death. When Menelaus died, his sons, along with those of Nicostratos, *Victorious People* (*νικάω* and *στρατός*), drove her forth from his palace. She fled for refuge to the island of Rhodes, but there was refused protection by Polyxo, the queen, whose husband had died in battle in the Trojan War. Hating Helen for the sorrows that had come upon the world by reason of her sin, the women of Polyxo disguised themselves as Furies and fell upon her while she was in the bath. Finally they dragged her forth and hanged her on a tree.

Helen's death was thus more sad and ignominious than the death decreed by Babylon and Israel for the sin she had committed. Except for the speeches of Priam and the aged Counsellors, no touch of wavering in condemnation of Helen occurs in the literature of Greece, so far as I have seen, and these suffered grievous punishment for their un-Wisdom. Homer, like the Prophets, is thus of the Old Dispensation, though he presents the character of Helen in such a way as to wring the heart with pity. It remained for the merciful Saviour to speak the word of pity for such as she, when the woman taken in adultery was brought to him:

Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone. . . . Neither do I condemn thee, go in peace.

This is of the New Dispensation, founded on love and a justice deeper than Apollo's. Had Homer's pitiful Helen helped to prepare the world to accept the New Law?

Modern critics have judged Menelaus a good man and a good king, kind-hearted, high-spirited, and honor-loving, perhaps judging, by modern standards, that he was generous in giving Helen her life. But it must not be forgotten that by this act he violated the laws of his gods and his fellowmen, and that Grecian people condemned him for it, as a writer so late as Euripedes proves. Menelaus was powerful enough to maintain himself against his people for a time, and, like Macbeth, he was strengthened in his resolution by a prophecy that he trusted—the tricky Old Man of the Sea had told him that he and Helen were to be made immortal.

From the tragic ending just recounted, we know that the tricky Old Man of the Sea deceived him. The conclusion of the story of

Menelaus and Helen, it will be remembered, was that *after Menelaus' death* Helen was driven forth from his palace by *his sons and the Victorious-People*. So it is clear that all condemned him. Must we not infer in addition that his death was not a natural death, but violent and at the hands of his people? Over whom, if not over him, had the *Victorious-People* been *victorious*? They had sacked the city of Troy because of Helen, they knew that the Trojans had been punished by the righteous gods because Paris and Helen had been permitted to stay in their city, disobeying the command of Apollo—would not their city also be destroyed if they permitted Menelaus to keep Helen within their walls? Incidents in Euripedes and the incident of Polyxo show how Grecian women felt toward Helen: Grecian men may have felt Helen's charm as the aged Counsellors in Troy had felt it, and, like the Counsellors may have said, "Even so, though she be so goodly let her go and not stay to vex us and our children after us." Being Greeks, they would not make the mistake of inaction, to bring on their city Troy's doom. The fact that their city was not destroyed confirms our conclusion that they did not remain inactive. Given the premises, action was not only logical but it also accounts for the term *Victorious-People* used in the myth. Poetic justice, which is Apollo's, would not be satisfied if Priam and his city were doomed for harboring Helen while Menelaus harbored her with impunity, to secure his own immortality at this risk to his people; but it is satisfied if Menelaus' *People* win *Victory* by doing that act of religion and patriotism which the Trojans were punished for not doing. Finally, Menelaus' people could not with sense or poetic justice drive Helen away *after Menelaus' death*, because she had broken the laws of the gods, if they had not dealt previously with Menelaus for the same reason.

Polyxo and her women killed Helen because she was the cause of the war—has not Homer shown Menelaus also the cause of the war, by his harsh and hateful spirit, evident in the scene of the wedding, and by the background of weltering evil with which, as a member of Atreus' house, he had surrounded her? When one looks into that welter of evil, one must think that if Helen had a grain of good in her nature, she must have been sorely tempted to flee with any promising man who would take her. That she did have good in her nature and that she thought Paris was a better man we see in her speech to Hector: "Would that I had been married to a better man who felt dishonor and the many reproaches of men. As for him, he has no sound heart now, nor ever will he have." This was spoken of Paris but its judgment applies even better to Menelaus

and the other members of his house, compared with whom Priam and the members of the Trojan royal house were at least as gray to black, for they erred through affection and loyalty. If Helen is compared with the women of Atreus' household, she is clearly superior to them, both to Aërope, Menelaus' own mother, and to Pelopia, Atreus' later wife, as we shall see when we look into this family.

To realize what family spirit was in Menelaus and Agamemnon, one must look to their infamous house, in which no single member among their ancestors had shown a regard to honor or the judgment of gods and men. No member but had a horrible record of unusually horrible crime committed in hate, self-seeking, and treachery. The founder was Tantalus, a son of the gods but guilty of sacrilege and the murder of his own son, whom he served to the gods at their banquet. The gods did not accept his offering, and condemned Tantalus to suffer punishment in Hades by the cup that is never filled. In the name *Tantalus* we see this punishment, for the root, *τλάω*, *I suffer pain and disgrace*, is prefixed by the double intensive, *τάν*, which means, *verily, in truth, let me tell you*. As a whole, then, *Tantalus* means, *Verily, let me tell you, I suffer pain and disgrace*.

The son of Tantalus, and the second of his line to bring down a curse from heaven, bore a sinister name to fit his dark deeds, *Pelops*, from *πελός*, *dark-colored*, and *Ὥψ*, *face, countenance*. Pelops won his throne by conspiracy and murder and then he committed a second murder to cheat his fellow conspirator out of his promised reward, thus violating even the honor and laws of thieves. When this victim was dying he called down a curse upon Pelops, and although he was himself a murderer, the gods heard his prayer and, in justice, sent the curse upon Pelops.

In the following generation the curse was doubled, and Atreus richly deserved his name, from *ἀτρηός*, *baneful, driven to ruin*, for he committed crime after crime, and died a violent death. With his younger brother, Thyestes, he conspired against their older brother, Chrysippus, who was the father's favorite, and murdered him; later in life he killed his own son, Plisthenes. Plisthenes had been reared in Thyestes' home as a hostage, and had now been sent out by Thyestes to find Atreus and murder him—Thyestes had probably exacted this child in precaution, to prevent Atreus from murdering him as their father had murdered his own co-conspirator, and now he tried to strike Atreus treacherously as he suspected Atreus intended to strike him. After Atreus had killed this son, Plisthenes, he took Plisthenes' widow in marriage, Aërope, and this was evidently done at once, for there was doubt as to whether

the twin sons to whom Aërope gave birth were the children of Atreus or of Plisthenes. These twin sons of this incestuous marriage were Menelaus and Agamemnon. Weighed down by such a heredity, would good be expected of them? Worse was still to come, for their mother, Aërope, now lent a willing ear to the seduction of this doubly criminal Thyestes, the original cause of her husband Plisthenes' death, and as if they had not all supped full on horror, Atreus took savage revenge for the seduction of Aërope. Pretending to forgive Thyestes, he invited him for a visit and then served him at the banquet with the flesh of his own sons. In retribution for this horrid wickedness, the gods afflicted Atreus' people with famine and commanded him to atone. When he tried to obey the oracle and set out to find Thyestes, he met Pelopia at a stage on the way, who was Thyestes' daughter, and, not knowing that she was Thyestes' child and then with child by Thyestes, he married her. The child whom Pelopia bore was that Aegisthus who was later to murder Atreus, seduce Clytemnestra, Agamemnon's wife, and help her to murder Agamemnon on his return from the Trojan War. These crimes of Aegisthus are seen doubly revolting when we reflect that he had been reared from his birth by Atreus as his son and in company with Menelaus and Agamemnon as their brother. Aegisthus finally met his doom at the hands of Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, while at the same time Orestes put Clytemnestra to death in retribution, though she was his own mother.

The question now rose whether Orestes, by putting his mother to death, had not added another ghastly crime to those of his house, and the doubt drove him to madness. But Athene came down in person from Olympus, along with Apollo, and in the court of the Areopagus, which they instituted to try his case, it was decided that his act was no crime, but was justified. Thereafter all wise men approved Orestes.

It is here that the *Odyssey* begins, with a counsel of the gods in Olympus discussing the death of Aegisthus and approving the act of Orestes. Father Zeus thunders forth a defense of the ways of the gods to this man, Aegisthus, whom they had warned from heaven not to woo the wife or kill the husband—"Now he hath paid the price!" This is the judgment that Zeus pronounces, and no ancient reader of Homer but would accept it as just. Athene adds to it her word of approval: "Surely that man [Aegisthus] lies in fitting ruin! So perish all who do such deeds!" "Such deeds," here clearly condemned, imply the commandments, "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

In the light of the curses and the dooms of this house of Atreus, where the sins of the father are seen to be visited upon the children through the third and fourth generations by jealous and righteous gods, and in the light of the just retribution meted to all individual members from Tantalus to Aegisthus, it is hard to see how any school of critics can hold that Homer wrote his epics free from all thought of morals, theology, ethics, or philosophy. Rather, in these epics, dark incidents of the doomed house in its last days are shown, and when the Victorious-People shall have risen to put Menelaus to death and drive Helen away, the fourth of the violent generations will have justly perished. As Orestes was justified in killing his mother, so the people will be judged justified in killing their king and thus ending intolerable wrongs.

Specific defects and wrongs of Menelaus as a king will be considered later. Neither Homer nor the Athenian dramatists intimate in any way that in his case the family curse had been lifted or that the righteous gods had extended him special grace or mercy. With such an environment of treachery and violence, and with such a tainted ancestry, it cannot be that Homer intended to picture him as a fig growing on a very thorny thistle. Even under the lenient modern theories of heredity the presumption would be strongly that a child born as he was and bred as he was would not develop into a good man and king, kind-hearted, high-spirited, and honor-loving.

That the righteous gods and all good and wise men helped Menelaus to capture Helen and punish Troy does not militate against this fact that Menelaus was himself evil and was punished for his wrong doing, for all of the wrongs done by him and his house did not make Helen's wrong right, a wrong that was multiplied in its power for evil because it imperiled the family, the home as an institution. In making Menelaus and Agamemnon and their house horribly bad, and in giving Helen and Clytemnestra every good reason for wanting to break the ties of their marriage, Homer stated the case for women in the home as strongly as possible: Women must not escape by adultery, by flight, or by murder, no matter what the situation may be. Helen, though a daughter of Zeus, was no exception. This was the law, not only in Greece, but in Israel and in Babylon, in all of the ancient world. That modern critics have failed to see this is doubtless owing to the confusion resulting from a change in viewpoint and from not comparing the laws of ancient nations on this point.

To establish the case for Menelaus as a good man and king, it must be shown (1) that all incidents in the epics relating to him are

capable of a favorable interpretation, (2) when, where, and how the curse that hung over him as a member of this house of Atreus had been lifted, and (3) that he and Helen were made immortal, as the tricky Old Man of the Sea prophesied when held under durance. (4) Facts to the contrary must be explained away, as that of the *Victorious-People* and that of *Helen of the Tree*.

Pity seems to have been felt for Helen, even in Rhodes, after she had "paid the price" to the righteous gods, for in Rhodes a temple was built to *Helen of the Tree*. This monument would seem to indicate that people felt that they had done something that ought to be expiated, something not in the spirit of Justice, and Wisdom, and the father of the gods, when they strangled Helen on the tree.

Agamemnon is pictured in his home as an even less worthy husband and father than Menelaus was, no more of a man. There must have been a long record of base deeds done by this king to warrant Achilles in taunting him, when they quarrelled, with having *the face of a dog* and *the heart of a deer*. We know some of the things he had done: (1) He had angered Apollo by injuring the family of a priest, and thereby brought pestilence upon his army in retribution; (2) he had outraged and estranged the best of his warriors by doing him an injustice, depriving him of his prize; (3) he had sacrificed his own daughter to secure military success; (4) he was not regardful of the feelings of his wife, as Odysseus was, and was bringing to her home a captured Trojan princess and the children she had borne him. Then Clytemnestra struck him down "like an ox in the stall," having disarmed him first and quieted his fears by warmly welcoming him home. The character of Agamemnon would justify Clytemnestra if anything could do so, but Homer does not justify her, and all praised her son Orestes later for putting his mother to death in retribution.

In happy contrast with these unhappy kings, who wrecked their homes by their own unworthiness, and were wrecked by their wives, stands wise Odysseus, and in contrast with their wives stands his Penelope, faithful and "heedful" Penelope. When the story opens, it is many years since Odysseus went to war, but Penelope has not forgotten. She still weeps for him, and she prays. She has brought up her son in his father's ways and to dream his father's return. She entertains all passing strangers so that she may learn from them any rumor about him that they may have heard, "a rumor sent from Zeus." She is sought by a host of suitors, but does not consider their offers of marriage; and, where she dares not reject them definitely because that would probably bring on a struggle among

them and her forcible abduction by the victor, she holds them off by her clever stratagem of the web that she is weaving—a windingsheet for Odysseus' aged father, promising that she will announce her decision when she takes it from the loom. But every night she unravels the work that she has done in the day, and never announces her decision. It is this incident which gives her her name, for Penelope is derived from *a web, to cover or wrap up* (*πίνη* and *λωπίζω*).

And Odysseus deserves her devotion. Where Agamemnon and Menelaus make plural marriages and keep concubines, Odysseus considers the feelings of his wife so much that he does not even take home a young Trojan princess as his prize, but asks for the aged Trojan Queen instead, as Homer tells. When plural marriages are no reproach, how good that Penelope cares so much, and that Odysseus cares that she cares! He gave her a monogamous home, and she made that home so happy that he did not want to go to the war. When they came to conscript him, they found him busy plowing salt into the earth to prove that he had gone crazy and ought to be exempted—a wily ruse! But they knew his wiles so well that they suspected him, and tested him by placing his baby on the ground where the plow would strike it. Odysseus turned aside so as not to plow the child under, so they concluded that his mind was sound and led him away to the ships. This incident does well to illustrate his love of home, but it is post-Homeric and does not do justice to Odysseus' profound belief in the righteousness of this war, which Homer shows in many incidents.

The personal love that his home-folk give to Odysseus is proved more than justified when we come to see this Zeus-praised, Athene-protected, world-famous hero in the incidents of the epics. In the **first scene** where he appears in the *Odyssey* he is a captive, held by a goddess who wants him to be her husband, and who would make him immortal if he would consent to remain. But he is not tempted to do so, and, when the curtain rises upon him, the greatest of heroes is seen sitting in tears on the shore of the sea, his face turned toward his little island kingdom, longing but to see the smoke rise in the distance from his own hearthstone. He is not thinking of the glory he won in the war and scheming for more riches and power, he is thinking of how to reach home, and this is the more to his credit because more than one goddess has offered him her love.

Circe had tried to enchant him and hold him with her, but he had resisted and forced her to do his bidding; even the Sirens could not win him, though he listened to their songs, for he had wisely restrained himself against their enticements. With women, as with

goddesses, he won an instant success. His godlike bearing, his gentle courtesy, his manly strength in making a plea, his sincere use of compliment, his freedom from all that would characterize the male flirt, or "lady-killer"—these win him a way to the hearts of good women. Instantly, Nausicaä feels confidence in him, as later her mother, Queen Virtue ('Αρήτη—ἀρετή), does, and as her father and his sage counsellors do. From the moment when Odysseus comes as a suppliant among them, seats himself in the ashes of their hearth to signify his utter need, and reaches up his hands to the knees of the Queen in appeal for assistance, he wins them all.

Stripped of every advantage of pomp and circumstance, he makes them feel his worth, not only of character, but also of physical power. He knew that he could win in their contests, but he held himself in the background modestly and would not enter until he was forced to do so by the taunt of a bystander, and even then he would not enter a contest against any member of the family of his kind entertainer. In all of the physical contests except running and dancing he won—it would have been unhuman if no defect whatever had been shown in this greatest of heroes, too discouraging for the coming generation of fellow-mortals. There was no flaw in his wits, in his heart, in his action; no other man could equal him in strength, or even draw his bow; no other equalled him in manly beauty, except in one important respect—the lower part of his body was out of proportion to the upper, being too short. It was this one defect that prevented him from being the first in dancing and first in single combat, as he was easily first in council, in shooting with the bow, in hurling the javelin, and in putting the shot. In that age, success in personal combat came to him who was most determined, courageous, skillful, and powerful, but also fleetest of foot and longest of leg, for he must be able to overtake his enemy who tried to flee, or to outstrip him if he for the time being tried to do the fleeing—Grecian warriors often chose to postpone a combat, and they counted it no disgrace to turn the back on an enemy, and run. It was Achilles, who was the fastest runner, that fought the single combats for the Greeks, a man counted less than wise and without high ideals; but the glory of bringing the war to a close was by common consent given to Odysseus, who planned the strategy with Wisdom.

So Odysseus was first in war, as he was first in building a home in peace, and certainly first among the kings in the hearts of all wise and good men. He and his household prayed often to the righteous gods, but no prayer to Aphrodite or Ares by either him or Penelope is reported by Homer, nor did any other of the high-souled heroes

at Troy pray to them, a final proof, if one were needed, that they condemned them, along with the frail mortals whom they misled. The love which is wise is the love of Odysseus' home.

This condemnation of Aphrodite that we find in Homer, we find strengthened, if possible, in the myth of Cupid and Psyche, which was developed several centuries after Homer, but in harmony with his spirit. In this beautiful myth, which was one of those presented among the most sacred mysteries at Eleusis, Cupid (Eros, Desire), is the son of Aphrodite but has so transcended his mother that he is the lover of the soul, Psyche, whereas Aphrodite represents love of the body only. There is nothing about Eros of the naughty little flutterer who shoots his arrows so as to make a midsummer madness of loving,—*in-and-out, out-and-in! Presto! Change about!* So Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus, late and degenerate Grecians might picture him, or degenerate Roman poets, who laughed at vows broken by lovers, and at discord between husbands and wives. To the Eleusinian worshippers, as to Homer, life was serious and earnest among men who were wise; to them, as to Penelope and Odysseus, love is devotion through long years of trial.

In the myth of Cupid and Psyche it is told that Cupid gave his love to a mortal maiden, the Soul, against the wishes of his hateful and low-minded mother, and that he was constant in his devotion though Psyche proved to be far from perfect. When she did not trust him though he loved her truly, he flew away, for love cannot live with suspicion; but while she was suffering the long and hard punishment which Aphrodite inflicted upon her, he watched over her secretly, won friends for her in her need, and finally came back to her when she had proved herself worthy. Such love as theirs was judged worthy of immortality, so a council of the gods at last decided to give her the butterfly wings and translate her to heaven, where she was fed the nectar ambrosia of Olympus. The meaning of this myth as a whole is that love, purified of earthly imperfections, is immortal. In the time of Homer the Greeks had not expected a happy life beyond the grave, but this myth is evidence that a hope of a heaven had risen *for those souls that had loved and suffered steadfastly*. Thus poetic justice was satisfied that a soul like Penelope shall not wander in blank forgetfulness in a sad, dark underworld, and that an Odysseus can have the immortality for which he would not sell himself to a goddess.

In this myth, the butterfly wings would not signify any lightness of character in Psyche such as we are accustomed to ascribe to the butterfly, but only an analogy between the soul that rises from

earth to heaven through purified love and that beautiful winged thing that has experienced transformation through stages of caterpillar and chrysalis. The caterpillar sometimes even descends into the earth, as into a grave, to make its chrysalis, and seems dead, but from it there issues forth the very beautiful winged creature which rises above the earth where it crawled and lay buried, to live a new life in a finer and rarer element, feasting on nectar. The Greeks doubtless adopted this nature-allegory and belief in the immortality of the soul from Egypt, where the Sacred Beetle had been used as the symbol of rising from literal corruption into incorruption. As the Egyptians buried scarabs in tombs, wrapped their dead in grave-cloth (like the gossamer in cocoons), and laid the mummy to repose in a sarcophagus which imitated the chrysalis of the Sacred Beetle in markings and design (as Fabre has pointed out), so the Greeks adopted the custom of carving a butterfly on the stone that marked the resting-place of the dead. The interpretation of the butterfly wings in the myth of Psyche to signify immortality is therefore beyond question.

Like the myth of Prometheus, *Fore-Thought*, the god who bore torture for saving man, this myth of the soul immortalized by true love became a stage to still higher religious teaching. It was presented, as we have said, in the mysteries at Eleusis, an institution developed some centuries after Homer to present the highest religious themes, the ways of gods to men, the immortality of the soul, the brotherhood of man, and the fatherhood of God. Along with the solemn initiations and the sacrament of the breaking of bread and the drinking of wine at Eleusis in sign of mystic brotherhood, these religious myths presented there helped to prepare the way for the fuller religious truth and the deepened mystic signification to be given to the world some centuries later in Palestine, where the mystic brotherhood consisted of those who stood ready to take up their cross, and the bread and the wine were given the meaning of self-sacrifice to the point of the body broken and the blood shed.

The fact of a connection between Grecian and Hebrew thought was forgotten by Western writers in later centuries, but patristic Grecian writers had made much of it on the affirmative side, for theological and practical purposes. To one who looks for it, the line of growth is as clear in Grecian thought as in Israelitish between the Prophets and their fulfillment in Jesus—both show what is called in Christian terminology the *working of the Holy Spirit*, in scientific, *an evolution*.

In the light of these profound moral and religious truths of Homer, we see how inadequate and often false are the ideas commonly held as to the ancient Greek religion. It seems that many of our ill-considered opinions on the subject have come to us from early Christians, not Saint Augustine, who rightly condemned the myths of degenerate Roman Vergil, but did not thereby, as Saint Augustine was careful to state, condemn the myths of the Grecian dramatists, or of Homer. Vergil's gods were Homer's false gods, for Vergil exalted Venus (Aphrodite) and Mars (Ares) and showed them triumphant, where Homer had shown them ignominious and defeated, Vergil's motive being to flatter the Romans and his patrons, who had adopted Mars (Ares) as an ancestor of Romulus and Venus (Aphrodite) as an ancestor of the Caesars.

Other ill-considered opinions have come down to us as with authority from the scholars who revived the study of Greek at the time of the Italian Renaissance, under the patronage of the powerful princes and business men of the period, and under the influence of Vergil. These scholars did not draw fine distinctions in interpretation, and the princes were no more of Athene and Apollo than Vergil had been, though they gave Apollo lip service and amused themselves with his arts, which is a very different thing from creating a high art under his inspiration. The real gods of their daily devotion were Aphrodite and Ares, Hermes and Hephaestus, False Love and War, Trade and Manufacture . . . again, the false gods of Homer. Such a spirit as this has never created a high art. The Borgias, the Medici, and the D'Estes took little interest in morals and religion, extended their power unscrupulously (Machiavelli told the truth about them in *The Prince*), and led riotous lives in their luxurious palaces, less like Odysseus' than like the Suitors'. To use the word *art* for their pseudo-Grecian product, voluptuous, languishing Venuses, sportful, naughty Cupids, riotous ramping Satyrs, and the like, is little short of profanation. These were in spirit the opposite of high, austere, Apollonian Homer, whose truly great art served nothing less than the exalted Sun, Apollo, the Destroyer of evil. The patrons of the Renaissance took from degenerated mythology only what suited their own views of life, and imputed these back to Homer. Love and war, private luxury and display, collection and investment were the purposes of their pseudo-Grecian art, as it has been of those rich patrons ever since whose real interest in life is the getting of money and power, and more and more money and power. All of this is offense to Apollo, whose great art in ancient Greece, from Homer to Pericles, was fundamentally religious and

public, to serve the gods and lift men above their lower selves by inspiration.

The truly great art of the Renaissance in Italy was Christian, not that of the pseudo-Grecians, not for private luxury and display. Like Athenian art it was fundamentally religious, and largely public, an expression of the best ideals of that day in literature, public buildings, temples for the worship of God, statues and pictures to adorn them. The ideals of this great Christian Renaissance art are also those of Homer, and the opposite of pseudo-Grecian.

These best ideals of the Renaissance can be seen in Shakespeare, the greatest secular poet of the period, as well as in Dante, the greatest religious poet. Shakespeare used the Trojan story in his *Troilus and Cressida*, developing the characters in accordance with the Vergilian, or pseudo-Grecian interpretation, which was the accepted interpretation of his time, and he shows little good in any person on either the Greek or the Trojan side. Saint Augustine himself was no sterner judge of Vergilian morals than Shakespeare showed himself here. The only hero in this play, if he may be called a hero, is Thersites, the truth-telling fool, who although he is beaten for it, goes on telling the truth about this world of lust, lying, perfidy, base jealousies, and general moral degradation. Thersites' characterization of the Trojan imbroglio is, "patchery, jugglery, and knavery," "all the argument a cuckold and a whore," "a good quarrel to draw emulous factions and bleed to death upon." Nothing could be truer than this of the Vergilian interpretation. There is a theory that Shakespeare wrote *Troilus and Cressida* in a spirit of literary jealousy because the tale of Troy was again popular among literary men and readers in his time, and thus, presumably, threatened his own supremacy—an unworthy theory, for the creator of Portia and Miranda, and hosts of other ideal women and heroes, need certainly not have been jealous of Vergil, or even of Homer. Shakespeare was a true son of Apollo, and infallible in his presentation of the noble as noble, and the ignoble as ignoble, from clown to king, during this greatest period, when *Troilus and Cressida* was written.

Justly, this play should be rated as one of his very greatest, for the reason that it presents rightly this meanness and this moral baseness at the very time when the whole body of artists and scholars were paying homage to Vergil, when they even regarded him as a pagan-prophet and a herald of Christianity.

But admitting that Shakespeare was right in holding the Vergilian characters base, we do not at all thereby admit that he was right if he judged Homer's characters so. If he had gone to Homer

for the source material for his Helen of Troy, his Helen could not have been the silly and vile person who jests with Pandarus in Act II, but would have been as high and tragic a Queen as Lady Macbeth or Guinevere, who are never ignoble. If Shakespeare had drawn the priest of Apollo in the spirit of Homer, his Calchas would not have been a low renegade and traitor when he went over into the Grecian camp from Troy, but a holy man fleeing from a Sodom, because his city had given itself to wickedness, defying the laws of his god; if he had shown Cressida as a consistent daughter of this father, he would not have made her a pattern of artifice and a byword for falseness in love, but must have shown her as turning from Prince Troilus, her unworthy Trojan suitor, and, under the guidance of Athene, wisely making Diomedes her choice, that young Grecian hero of the *Iliad*, perfect in ideals, in self-devotion, in council, in battle, in strategy, in personal victory over Aphrodite and Ares. For the sake of his holy cause, Diomedes has even endured in silence the injustice of Agamemnon, intending to disprove Agamemnon's imputations as to his character by feats on the battlefield, thus showing himself a wiser and better warrior, patriot, and man than Achilles has been.

*Troilus and Cressida* has been called a comedy of disillusion, and so it is—of disillusion as to Vergilian and pseudo-Grecian values, and by this fact Shakespeare should be given rank as the greatest of Renaissance critics, as a high artist in the service of the good and the true, far above the rank that should be given Vergil. In fact, looking upon these things after this manner, one must take Vergil down from the high pedestal to which he has been elevated, and must rank him the lower because, with Homer to open his eyes to the good and the truly beautiful, he chose to pervert that high truth and beauty to pander to a degenerate Caesar.

Judged by the standards of Homeric, Apollonian, and Christian art, Dante is to be ranked, as has been said, along with Homer. Unlike Vergil, he was no flatterer of princes, and he was certainly not Aphrodisian; unlike the pseudo-Grecians, he was of the austere school of Homer and the prophets, being Vergilian only as he honored Vergil because Vergil was mistakenly believed to have prophesied the coming of the Saviour and so to have been a kind of pagan-prophet and herald of Christianity. This was a great mistake of Dante's uncritical times, for Vergil's prophesying applied to the Caesars, who were assuming divine honors in imitation of the rulers of the East, and his expected Saviour was Augustus, whose

“Roman peace” was to be attained by means of war, and world-conquest.

Great as Dante was—he has been well called the voice of ten silent centuries—he was far less of a power and an influence among his people and those of the following centuries than Homer is seen to have been in Greece, for Homer was a national poet who not only gave his nation a voice, but became its religious leader by presenting Wisdom and Justice in such a way, embodied in Athene and Apollo, as to form, or determine its later religion, politics, and art. Athens would not have been more glorious than other nations if Athenians had not built their institutions on Wisdom and Justice more than other nations, more than our foremost modern so-called democracies in various important respects, not only in the arts, but also in the law and the administration of land, courts, and finance. The Athenian passion for Wisdom and Justice we may credit to Homer, and also the practical fruits that came from this passion, including the influence that Athens has had upon the whole civilized world. When we add to this, that Homer, with the Prophets, prepared the way for Christianity, we begin to understand how great a moral and religious power he has been, and still is, indirectly, though his ideals have been mistakenly identified for centuries with those of Vergil.

When these points become clear, we must revalue Homer, and assign him the foremost place among poets, a place very near to the Prophets, so giving to him the honor that the Middle Ages gave by mistake to Vergil. If there was a pagan-prophet and herald of Christianity, it was not Vergil, but Homer.

## CHAPTER II

### INTERPRETATION OF HOMERIC NAMES

IT IS clear from what we have seen thus far that Homer's stories should not be regarded as tales designed merely to pass the time pleasantly—when we look into their deeper meanings we begin to wonder whether these epics were not moralities, like *Pilgrim's Progress*, for we find that the names of the characters, like Bunyan's, are appropriate to the vices and virtues which distinguish them. Let us not be understood to mean that Homer preaches—he is far too good an artist to do that, as Bunyan also is. Both show men as they are, dramatically and realistically, so that we love them or hate them for the traits that they reveal. An examination of the names in Homer as to their derivation and root-meaning will repay our effort and throw light upon the moral intent of these stories—we shall find Mr. Pliable, Mr. Wordly-Wiseman, Mr. Facing-both-Ways among them:

Leading the vicious characters we find:

Antinoüs—ἀντί and νοῦς, *without-mind, fool, idiot*. Can this be the name that his father and mother gave him when he was a child? That is not possible. In character, this man is violent and vicious, a ringleader among the Suitors, whose violence and foolishness are fitly punished when Odysseus returns and shoots him first among the Suitors.

Paris—παπιανός, *I sleep beside, or with*. This is the phrasing in the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi for committing adultery, a crime which was decreed the penalty of drowning in the river, for both of the guilty persons. This also is not the name that the parents of this prince gave their child at his birth, nor is that of *Alexander*, which Homer often calls him, derived from ἀλέξω and ἀνήρ, δρός, meaning *defender of men*, as has been suggested, but also *defended of men*, more appropriately, and as reproach to the men who defended him, for they should, according to Babylonian law, have drowned him along with his companion in the river; according to Israelitish law, they should have stoned him; according to the command of Apollo, they should have cast him out from their city.

Helen—This name is usually derived from the Aryan root meaning *to shine, to beam*, cognate with the root in *Helios*, the sun, and this would be appropriate to this queen because of her exceeding beauty. However,

there is an infinitive, *ελεῖν*, which must have been suggested to Greek hearers by the name, meaning *to grasp by the hand, to lead away, to seduce*, particularly appropriate to Helen because it fits her elopement with Paris and because ancient vase-paintings commonly represent her going away with Paris, *hand in hand*. The earliest represents her leading, and the Greeks did not regard her act lightly or condone it. As late as the later times of Euripides she was hated by the people, and in the *Electra* Euripides shows her own father refusing to protect her. She is afraid that the people will do her violence if she appears on the streets and ventures forth only with a muffled face and at night.

**Menelaus**—μένω, *I stay behind*; λαός, *the common men, subjects*. This king is commonly called by Homer *Good-at-the-Battlecry*, and the suggestion now is that he usually shouted safely in the rear. In incidents in the *Iliad* he appears as a coward, and he was the last of the kings to return from the war to his home, except Odysseus, who was forcibly detained.

**Agamemnon**—ἀ-γάμος, *a marriage that is no marriage, a fatal marriage*, and μέμνημα, *I remember, or I recollect*. This referred to the scene in Hades, when Agamemnon told Odysseus how his wife had killed him. This name is appropriate. If this king was an historical character, this name can have been given him only after his death.

**Clytemnestra**—κλύω, *I give ear to*, μνηστήρ, *a suitor*. This is a fitting name, for this queen gave ear to Aegisthus' wooing.

**Aegisthus**—αἴξ-γός, *a goat*. This was a goaty, lascivious, unheroic man who did not go to the war.

Agamemnon and Menelaus, unfortunate kings whose house had been shadowed by a curse of black crime for generations, are cursed in their own persons with traits that bring them sorrow—will their children be more happy? The daughter of Menelaus by Helen is named *Hermione*, and she is described as having “the grace of golden Aphrodite.” Alluring in body, and with a name that is feminine for *Hermes*, patron of traders and thieves, we may expect her to be even less reliable than her mother, and “fast.” Her half-brother, the son of Menelaus by a slave-mother, is named *Megapenthes*, from μέγα, *great*, and πενθεῖν, *to bewail*, a name with little promise of happiness for his parents or the new family that he will found. He will have the usual fate of the House of Atreus, his ancestors, ἀτρπός, *driven to ruin, baneful*. The bride of Megapenthes is a daughter of Alector, whose name is derived from ἀλέκτωρ meaning a cockerel, and imitates the sound of a cock's crow. He, it seems, is *Good-at-Crowing*, as Menelaus is *Good-at-the-Battlecry*. The coming generation can hardly be expected to lift the curse from the house of Atreus, we conclude.

The good characters in Homer also have names that are fitting:

Odysseus—*ὅδισσομαι*, *I am full of (righteous) wrath, anger*. This is appropriate because the Suitors wronged him and he punished them for it.

Penelope—*πήνη*, *a thread, a web, λωπίσω*, *I cover, I wrap up*. This is appropriate in reference to the famous web that Odysseus' queen was weaving as a stratagem to put off answering the Suitors, on the plea that it must be ready for a winding-sheet for Odysseus' aged father.

Telemachus—*τελεῖν*, *to complete, to perfect, μάχομαι*, *I fight*, with nouns and adjectives as desired. In connection with *ἀνήρ*, *man*, *τέλεος* means a *full-grown man*, a *man who has full rule or authority*, *able to do or bring about*, and this fits the character and situation of Telemachus admirably, for in the first incident in which he appears in the *Odyssey* Athene finds him dreaming like a boy but rouses him to act like a *man*. His first act of *authority* is to tell his mother to return to her chamber when she has come down to speak to the bard in the presence of the Suitors, and to announce to her that *authority in his father's house rests in him*. This pleases her greatly, for it shows her that her son has *become a man*. He now proceeds to call an assembly, lay his wrongs before the people, warn the Suitors to leave his palace or take the punishment which he calls upon them from Zeus, and announce that he himself is intending to undertake a journey to seek his father. The adverb *τῆλε*, *far away*, is usually accepted as a root in the name of Telemachus, but has no application to his case. He is not only *completely a man*, but also *completely a warrior*, as his name implies, discreet, farsighted, courageous, obedient to command, generous enough to give the evildoers a warning and a chance to avoid punishment, and admirable in every respect as he stands by his father through the last combat. He does not fight *from afar*, but hand to hand and face to face, with word and weapon.

Alcinoüs—*ἀλκή*, *ἀλκή*, and *νοῦς*, *strong-mind*, was fitly named, the king of the sailor-nation, who helped Odysseus on his last stage home.

Arete—*ἀρετή*, *goodness, excellence, virtue*, was the charitable queen who granted Odysseus the privileges of a suppliant when he made his appeal to her. She is a fit wife for Alcinoüs, and her daughter, Nausicaä, is the wife-to-be for Telemachus. She is the perfect girl, as he is the perfect man and warrior. She is dreaming of her approaching wedding; Queen Helen has given Telemachus a robe for his bride to wear on her wedding day, a very beautiful robe woven by her own hands; Fate even puts the words into Nausicaä's mouth that she wishes the gods would send her *such a husband as Odysseus*—Telemachus is so very like his father in head and beautiful eyes that Helen knows him at sight as Odysseus' son when he comes unannounced to the palace of Menelaus. The lines seem all laid for this marriage, and for the founding of a new house, whose kings shall be not like those of the house of Atreus, *baneful*, and *driven to ruin*, but wise and just in their rule. With such parents as Telemachus and Nausicaä, and such grandparents as Odysseus and Penelope, Alcinoüs and Arete, the coming generation of the new house is certain to be dear to gods and to men. No manlier groom and no womanlier bride were ever made for each other.

Can it have been mere accident that all of these names fitted the characters? Impossible. It is impossible, too, that these were the

names given to the children by their parents, for (1) some of them are not affectionate, as that of Antinoüs, (2) some fit the events of mature life, as that of Paris, and (3) that of Agamemnon can have been given only after his death. Were these "nick-names," and applied to real people as we call Lincoln *Honest Abe*, a name that he bore among the neighbors? And were they perhaps caught up by the poet and passed along to the exclusion of the names that the individuals had really borne? Or were there no historic characters who bore these names, but just fit names to convey moral allegory?

It is not necessary that we should answer these questions here; later we will touch upon the questions of historic fact. It is sufficient for our purpose to realize that the names must have conveyed to the early Greeks who heard the *Odyssey* recited the vices and the virtues of the characters, and that this was done by means of native roots, strongly, as the native roots of *Pilgrim's Progress* do, more effectively than the names in Shakespeare's *Tempest* do, where the derivation is from foreign roots:

Prospero—*pro*, ahead; *spero*, I hope. Prospero hoped ahead when other men would have despaired.

Miranda—*miror*, *miranda*, to be wondered at. Miranda is Shakespeare's Wonder, the most perfect of his heroines.

Ariel—*aer*, air. He is an airy Spirit of the Air.

Caliban—*cannibal*, by metathesis. Even the transposition of the letters is appropriate and symbolical, for Caliban is dwarfed and crooked.

If the pleasure in appropriate names is strong in *The Tempest*, it must have been doubly strong to the Greeks in their Homer, where it pointed more strongly the moral qualities.

Having discovered that Grecian primitive names of individuals carried a meaning appropriate to the character of the individual or some incident in his career, we turn to investigate the names in the Bible to see what was the practice in primitive Israel. We discover that the Israelitish custom was the same as the Greek, and that the names in the Bible, as in Homer's epics, often furnish a key to unlock the story. The following from the Old Testament will suffice to make this clear:

Adam—*red earth*, *earth man*. Adam was made of *red earth*, was the first *earth man*.

Eve—*life*. Eve gave *life* to the race.

Moses—*drawn out of the water*. This refers to the Pharaoh's daughter finding the babe in the Nile.

Abraham—*father of a multitude*. Abraham founded a nation.

Isaac—*laughter*. Abraham stood ready to offer to God this very joy of his life.

Jacob—a *supplanter*. Jacob supplanted his brother, Esau, in their father's favor.

Esau—*hairy*. It was by making himself seem *hairy* that Jacob deceived his father as to Esau (who was *hairy*), and so supplanted him.

Benjamin—*son of the right hand*. It was Benjamin who was his father's favorite, and sat at his *right hand*.

Hannah—*grace*. God granted Hannah grace when she prayed for a child, and sent Samuel to her.

Samuel—*asked for of God*. This was the child that Hannah asked of God.

Gideon—a *destroyer*. Gideon *destroyed* Jericho.

Elijah—*Jehovah is my God*. This is an appropriate name for the prophet who led the struggle against Baal and his worshippers.

Job—*afflicted*. Job was *afflicted* with loss of all he held dear, and with bodily ills.

Elihu—*God the Lord*. When Job had silenced his friends and denied their charge that he had committed a sin for which affliction was sent on him, Elihu, who is now seen to be *God the Lord*, spoke telling him that, being mortal, he must have been guilty of some sin, and this Job admitted. This incident is the turning-point in the drama. Commentators have been much puzzled to know who Elihu was, so young, speaking with such authority. The explanation from the derivation of the name is that *God the Lord* spoke through this youth, or an objectified conscience, and that is sufficient for artistic purposes.

In various instances names in the Bible are shown in process of being changed in maturity so as to fit a change of character or circumstance in the individual, as when *Abram*, meaning *high*, is changed to *Abraham*, meaning *father of a multitude*, at the time when God promised him a son and through this son many progeny. So *Naomi*, whose name meant *pleasant*, renounced this name, which she had been known by, when she was deep in sorrow: “Call me not *Naomi*, call me *Mara*, for the Almighty hath dealt very *bitterly* with me.”

This name *Mara*, meaning *bitter*, is the root of *Mary*, the name of the *Mother of Sorrows*. In the New Testament narrative, the name *Martha* means, appropriately, *the ruler of the house*; it was *Martha* who was “careful and troubled” about many household duties. It is certain that, so late as the New Testament narratives, the custom of giving names with a meaning to fit a character or events in the life of the individual was still observed. Thus the name *Jesus*, which means *Saviour*, was given to the new-born child, according to Saint Matthew, because an angel of the Lord commanded Joseph to do so: “Thou shalt call his name *Jesus*, for he shall save his people from their sins.” The word *Christ* means *annointed*, and seems to have been first used as a name for Jesus by Peter in

the passage where Jesus asked His Disciples, "Whom do men say that I the son of man am?" To this Simon Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." This seems to be both the first time that the name *Christ* was given to Jesus and the first time that the name *Peter*, meaning *rock*, was given to Simon, for Jesus answered him: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven, and I say unto thee that thou art *Peter*, and upon this *rock* will I build my Church." Finally, in this incident the name *Peter*, as a proper name, originated. It had not been used as a name for people in pre-Christian times. Was it an accident that the first martyr was called *Stephen*, and had he always been called so, or was the name *Stephen* applied to him only after he had been *crowned with martyrdom*? The name *Stephen* means a *crown*. It would be in the primitive spirit to displace his less significant early name after the event with the more significant one.

Following the primitive age of Homer, the Greeks kept their custom of naming into historic times, at least to some extent. Both Plato and Glaucon had other individual names, but were called *Plato*, meaning *broad*, and *Glaucon*, meaning *blue-eyed*, among their intimate friends. Their earlier names are now found with difficulty, while these appropriate names have come down through the ages. That the appropriateness of the names of mature persons was not discussed by the Greeks themselves, whether they occurred in life or in literature, need occasion no surprise, but may rather be taken as proof that the custom was general, native, and long established, and therefore taken for granted. Hearing the plays of Sophocles, the Greeks would not think of commenting on the fact that *Oedipus* means *pierced-feet* and that this was appropriate because that character had been exposed on the mountain to die when a child, with his *feet pierced* and tied together. This explanation would seem to them too obvious to call for comment, but the point would be effective with them nevertheless. Foreigners, however, would take the name *Oedipus* merely as a name without a meaning, or, if they did see the meaning, they would point out its appropriateness and discuss it. After the custom of using names with appropriate meaning had passed away, and when names had come to be given without regard to their meaning, being chosen in compliment to friends who had borne them, or to ancestors or other members of the family, or noted heroes or saints, or popular actors, or the favorite virtues, or simply because they were pleasing and euphonious, even the Greeks themselves might not catch the meaning in the primitive name and

its application to the person, because they had become accustomed to names used merely as names.<sup>1</sup>

It is possible that this stage of using names merely as names with no appropriate meaning, in modern fashion, had become usual in Plato's time, for there is a passage in his *Timaeus* which shows that he realized that primitive names had meaning and that it was better to translate them than merely to translitter. In this dialogue he refers to a manuscript which the great Solon (Solon was one of Plato's ancestors) had brought from Egypt, intending to use the historical facts that it contained in a poem. Solon had received this historical material on prehistoric Athenian history from the Egyptians, but in these notes he used not Egyptian names but Grecian. The passage from *Timaeus* explaining this is the following:

Yet before proceeding further in the narrative, I warn you that you must not be surprised if you should hear Hellenic names given to foreigners. I will tell you the reason of this: Solon, who was intending to use the tale for his poem, made an investigation into the meaning of the names and found that the early Egyptians, in writing them down, had translated them into their own language, and he recovered the meaning of the several names and copied them out again in our own language. My great-grandfather had the original writing, which is still in my possession, and was carefully studied by me when I was a child.

The pleasure and the profit to interpretation in the use of appropriate names is great when they occur in our own language; and the

<sup>1</sup> In the course of this investigation of Homer's names, an attempt was made to discover whether the root meaning was still apprehended by the Greek people and whether the primitive names were therefore effective still. Such Greeks as one finds in our candy-stores and at our restaurant counters became source-material for this experiment. After a friendly introduction and a statement that I was a great admirer of Greek literature and Greek history, my first question was submitted, "What does *Penelope* mean?" This was always met with a look of blank confusion, until it dawned upon my hearer that I was talking about *Pe-ne-lö'-pe*, as they always call her. Finally the answer came, "Oh! *Pe-ne-lö'-pe*. She was a very great queen." They all knew the story, which they had learned as little children in school. When I pressed them further with the question what the word *Pe-ne-lö'-pe* means, the only answer I succeeded in eliciting was, "It is a name." When at last I pointed out the connection between Penelope and *πήνη λωπλξω*, a web, *I wrap or cover up*, and that this referred to the famous web which Penelope was weaving for a winding-sheet, a slow look of comprehension dawned, with final acceptance of the new idea. Two of my experiments ended with the assertion, "I am no scholar—I am only a common man," modestly assuming that greater and more learned men would have known this fact. That more learned Greeks would know is not at all certain. I have not been able to carry the experiment far enough to learn whether they would or not. Some of these men whom I met were far from common men, and were treasuring their Grecian myths and traditions in this country. One of them went to the desk in the restaurant where we were talking and brought out one of Plato's *Dialogues*, in a modern version, which he was reading in his spare moments, and this he graciously gave me as a mark of appreciation of the interest I was showing in his native land. He surely must be regarded as no "common" man.

loss is great when the appropriate names in a foreign literature are not translated but merely transliterated, as has been the custom in translating the classics and the Bible. If a Solon should come among translators of the classics, would he not translate the names for us, so that we might grasp the full meaning? Should not a new translation of Homer be given us now, using our native roots for the names? If the transliterated names continue to be used—and there is something of color added by using them—they should be followed by their translation. The difficulties are not insuperable:

Then Pallas Athene, Leaping Wisdom, came dashing down the ridges of Olympus and in the land of Ithaca stood at Odysseus', the Avenger's, gate on the threshold of his court. . . .

A page put a beautiful harp into the hands of Phemius, Tale-Teller, Disclaimer, who sang perforce among the Suitors. . . .

Now from an upper chamber there came forth to hear this wondrous song the daughter of Icarius, Lord-of-the-Icarian-Sea, heedful Penelope, Weaver-of-the-Web-for-Wrapping. . . . Bursting into tears, she said to the noble bard, Phemius, Tale-Teller, Disclaimer, "Many another tale you know to charm mankind, sing one of them . . ." Then answered her discreet Telemachus, Perfect-Warrior, "My mother, why forbid the honored bard to cheer us in whatever way his mind is moved?" Amazed, she turned to her own room again, for the wise saying of Telemachus, Perfect-Warrior, her son, she laid to heart.

Walking by his side with blazing torch went faithful Eurykleia, Wide-Caretaker, daughter of Ops, Overseer, son of Peisenor, Obedience.

Geranian Nestor sat enthroned, as warden of the Achaeans, holding the scepter. Round him his sons collected in a group on coming from their chambers, Sensible, Warlike, Hero, Pious, Gallant-Courage, and last came Lord Peisistratus, Prevailing-with-the-People. Meanwhile, fair Polycaste, Many-Stitches-with-the-Needle, youngest daughter of Nestor, gave a bath to Telemachus, Perfect-Warrior.

And to the lodge the noble swineherd, Eumaeus, Try-Well, led the way. . . . "So good a master I had. But he is gone! Would all of the tribe of Helen, the Shining-One, the Seductive, had gone too, down on their knees! for she has made the knees of many men grow weak."

### CHAPTER III

## “FALSE GODS” IN THE BIBLE AND IN HOMER APHRODITE, ARES, HEPHAESTUS

THERE are no devils in Homer's epics, but certain of the gods bring destruction to those who serve them, and these are, in general, the same “false gods” whom we find in the Bible, notably Aphrodite and Ares, who are the counterparts of Biblical Ashtaroth and Baal. Indeed, the central theme of Homer (which is the destruction of Troy because the Trojans, from Paris to Priam, had turned to Aphrodite against Athene, to whom they had given earlier devotion) finds an exact parallel in Israel, related in Judges ii. 12-15:

(12) And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers . . . and followed other gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them and provoked the Lord to anger;

(13) And they forsook the Lord and served Baal and Ashtaroth;

(14) And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.

(15) Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them; and they were greatly distressed.

However exalted the goddess Istar (Astarte, Ashtaroth, Aphrodite) may have been in her origin and in early Babylon, where she had been regarded as the Virgin, Mother of All, the ideal woman untainted and immortal, she was certainly not exalted and pure as traders and sailors carried her cult to the West in later ages. In Palestine, where she was worshipped along with her earthly lover, Tammuz (Adonis), she was regarded by Prophets and Judges as debased earthly love—shall we find her regarded by Homer as exalted heavenly love? The fact that in historic times many of her statues in Grecian temples showed purity of outline and nobility of character, as the Venus of Milo did, would seem to prove that the higher cult of Aphrodite Urania was present in Greece, though

the lower, that of Aphrodite Pandemos, came to predominate. The name *Aphrodite*, given her in Greece, would argue the same conclusion. Competent scholars hold that *Aphrodite* is derived from the Egyptian word *Apharadat*, meaning "Gift-of-Ra," Ra being the god of the sun, and exalted; but this foreign derivation seems to have been forgotten by the Greeks themselves as time passed, and they gave it a native root, *ἀφρός*, meaning "foam." Consistently with this they developed the fable that this goddess was a child of the sea and born of the foam, which would make her an altogether lower sort of person. The accident of homophony may have given them this idea, or the fact that she had acquired a character as "unstable as water." Homer does not show Aphrodite as a virgin mother, but as the wedded wife of Hephaestus, secretly connected with Ares, and exposed to shame by Apollo. Her opposite and opponent is Athene, the Virgin, goddess of wisdom, who is given the highest esteem in heaven and among the wise on earth.

In Troy, the "gods of the fathers" had been Athene and Father Zeus, and in accord with them Apollo, the god of just retribution, who warned the people that destruction would come to them through Paris. . . . Had Homer heard of the incident in the history of Israel, how "the Lord had said and sworn unto them" that they would be punished if they admitted the worship of the false gods of the nations round about, including Ashtaroth, and how he had punished them when they forsook him, delivering them "into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them and selling them into the hands of their enemies, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies"? As a bard, Homer had wandered far, and the Ionian lands where he had his home were not far distant from Palestine. Certainly, his great story and the Athenian dramas later built upon it have the theme that we have found in Judges ii., and the fate of Troy and her people was a warning to the unwise worshippers of Aphrodite.

On the question of an influence from Palestine upon Greece, we have an opinion of Saint Augustine that some of the great Athenian writers, whom he loved and honored even after he turned Christian, were under the influence of the Hebrew Prophets. He mentions Plato and the Athenian dramatists specifically as having been so—was it an accident of omission on his part that he did not mention Homer along with them? Plato and the Athenian dramatists drew their themes largely from Homer, and the influence of the Prophets may have come to them through him. Writing in the degenerate days of Rome, Saint Augustine has much to say

about the vice of the Trojan myth as it was told in his country and by Vergil, but we shall see that his criticisms do not apply to the version given by Homer. To please his patrons, the Caesars, who had enrolled the goddess Venus (Ashtaroth) among their ancestors, Vergil glorified Venus and showed her finally triumphant when Troy fell, in rescuing Aeneas, her son by the shepherd Anchises, and in founding an imperial city, Rome, this by the assistance of Ares (Mars), who was accounted in Rome an ancestor of Romulus. Homer had shown Aphrodite, along with Ares, her secret lover, defeated in war and unable to protect her votaries, driven abashed out of heaven amid the laughter of the gods—the goddesses remained away for shame—when her cunning husband, Hephaestus, caught the guilty pair in his golden net, having learned of their relation through Apollo. Homer did not preach a crusade against Aphrodite for this and tear down her temples, as a Hebrew prophet had done, but he used the Greek method of turning laughter against her, that potent laughter of comedy by which Athenian moralists tried to destroy what they did not love and admire. Homer never turned laughter against what he loved and admired, and the good and the great in his epics were not much given to laughter even of a satiric sort, but were distinguished by the high seriousness and earnestness fitting to epic lives.

Among the other “false gods” of Homer are Ares, the god of war, and Hephaestus, the god of craftsmanship, or manufacture, both “gods of the nations round about,” for Ares was the god of the wild, hostile Scythians of the steppes and Hephaestus was the god of the Cretans, a commercial people with great skill, but not dear to those who had to pay them tribute, witness the story of Theseus and the Minotaur. Aphrodite, also, was “of the nations round about,” having been brought in through Cyprus from the East.

The unfortunate child of a bitter quarrel between Zeus and Hera, Hephaestus was ill-tempered, and he was deformed in body not only by the accident at his birth but also by the occupation of his choosing. He was the smith among the gods, and a subject for their laughter. Unwisely he had desired Aphrodite for his wife, it seems without loving her, for his nature was ignoble and no note of heartfelt sorrow is to be detected in his talk when he discovers that she has betrayed him secretly with Ares. He spies upon her and resorts to cunning and vulgar exposure, so that he becomes ridiculous instead of tragic, as he would not be if his wife’s base betrayal hurt his heart. He rants, he clamors about the riches he gave for her to her father, and threatens to demand them back.

brooches, spiral armbands, necklaces, and cups set with precious stones. These are his delight, and will be the dearest things on earth to his votaries, though they lack those highest of values which the god Apollo gives to high art by inspiration through the Muses. Homer did not make the mistake of thinking that there can be a high art without the spirit of light, breathed into the artist by the god of light. The work of mere craftsmen is only Hephaestus' work. Even the wonderful shield that Hephaestus made for Achilles was a work of mere craftsmanship, not inspired by the Muse, though it pictured many appealing subjects with utmost skill. A background of nature, and people, high and low, at their work and their play—these a true artist might take for works of high art and as a means to high life, working with aspiration and insight and reverence, in love of this beautiful earth, sympathy with his brother, Man, and gratitude to the Divine Giver of all good things. Such a spirit is not in the work of Hephaestus, and how little he cared is shown by the fact that he put these scenes from life on a shield, where they would be hacked and battered.

Even less in regard among gods and wise and good men than this smith, Hephaestus, was Ares, the god of war, inconstant and secret lover of inconstant Aphrodite, and betrayer of Hephaestus' home. Though Odysseus was the greatest of warriors, he was not in Ares' service, and he would have preferred not to go to the war, but to remain at home with his wife and child. No wise man loves war for its own sake, or even for the chances it gives him for fame, as Ares and his worshippers do. Ares does not fight for a cause because it is just, as Apollo does, nor because it is wise, as Athene does, and, being without moral power, he often turns coward on the battlefield and is always vanquished by those who have moral power though they seem at a first glance far weaker than he. So, a very young mortal hero, Diomedes, because he is strong in devotion to his worthy cause, lays Ares low in combat, this "false god" who is wrong. The *Iliad* shows in various incidents how contemptible Ares is. When he has been vanquished by Diomedes in combat, he flees to Father Zeus, to get sympathy! and to complain of Athene because she started the war! But, son though he is, he receives cold comfort from Father Zeus, for Zeus looks sternly upon him, and says:

"Nay, thou renegade, sit not by me and whine. Most baleful art thou to me of all the gods that dwell in Olympus. Thou ever lovest strife and wars and battle. . . . My offspring art thou . . . but wert thou born of any other god, long ere this hadst thou been lower than the sons of heaven."

Ares is condemned by his mother, Hera, also, and no less rigorously, for she is the guardian of the home, which he has violated both by his intrigue with Aphrodite and his support of the Trojans who are protecting Paris and Helen. Of Athene, Ares has no comprehension, and when he faces her in combat he can only call her witless names. "Thou dogfly!" he shouts to her, "what is the reason thou makest gods fight thus?" Such as he are not amenable to argument, so she answers, "Fool, hast thou not been taught to know mine eminence?" and then proceeds to teach him her eminence by vanquishing him in combat, for he may be convinced, or at least impressed, by the fact that his own tremendous brute force has been less than equal to her moral force. While Ares lies on the field, defeated and unable to rise, Aphrodite comes forward to help him, raises him up, and begins to lead him away; but she is stopped by Hera and Athene. "Athene, see!" cries Hera, "Ares is helped from the field! 'Dogfly' his rude tongue named thee—upon her fly!" Urged on thus by Ares' own mother to punish them, Athene flies at Aphrodite, beats her a furious blow on the breast, and lays her low ignominiously, along with Ares, while she shouts over them in triumph, "So lie all who succor yield to the false Trojans against the Greeks!" And at this, "whitewristed Hera smiled," though she saw her own son thus publicly beaten and scorned.

It will be observed that in the shout of triumph quoted, Athene expressed no personal rancor or satisfied spite against a rival, but only joy in victory for her cause. The motive usually ascribed to her and to Hera for opposing Aphrodite is vanity wounded because the Apple of Love was not awarded to one of them as most fair by Paris, but to her. This interpretation is not sustained by the preceding incident, nor by any other in Homer. If Athene were meanly vain and jealous, Zeus would not show such regard to her, but would roundly tell her her shortcomings, as he told Ares his. She is his Wisdom, and when he yields to her, it is always because she has spoken wisely. In this war, he must give support to her, because wisdom ought to prevail over unwisdom in such matters as this of violating a home; also, as guardian of guests and of hosts, he ought to take sides against Paris and those who protect him in Troy. Hera's speech urging Athene to humiliate Ares still farther and to attack Aphrodite, is further evidence that wounded vanity is not the motive of Athene—far from being a myth in which two vain goddesses plunge the world into war to spite a rival, Homer's great myth shows Hera overcoming her former feeling against Athene, who was no child of hers, and suppressing her natural prejudices in favor of

her own child, in order to do her duty as guardian of the home. Only the "false gods" will defend Paris and his protectors; against them must be ranged (1) Athene, because they are unwise; (2) Hera, because she guards the home; (3) Zeus, because he punishes those who violate the rites of hospitality, and (4) Apollo, because they had been forewarned by prophecy against doing the evil thing but had done it nevertheless. Only a degenerate time, like that of Vergil, will obscure and misrepresent these motives.

This interpretation of the myth of the fall of Troy as sternly moral and religious, as is the Bible story, is consistent with what we know of the times in which Homer lived. The Homeric age was not an age of dalliance and sophistication, but was notably serious and earnest as compared with later times. Critics have long realized this and have called Homer's the *Apollonian period*, in distinction from the *Dionysian* which followed. It was characterized by subjection of the individual to the gods, and by self-restraint, which Apollo commanded, while the cult and period of Dionysos were characterized by a greater emotional fervor along with a general abandonment of self-control, sometimes to the "frenzy." The tendency to excess resulted speedily in degeneration, and finally in the evils so sternly and justly condemned by the early Christians. The Athenian drama of the great period (450 B.C.), with which Saint Augustine was in keen sympathy, as we have said, showed no weakening of the Apollonian self-control, but a happy blending of Apollonian and Dionysian elements. Its themes were taken largely from Homer, and its spirit was high and earnest, with developments in faith beyond what Homer had grasped, but consistent, and, as Saint Augustine judged it, very like the faith of the Prophets. The periods to which Homer, Hesiod, Solon, Plato, and the Athenian dramatists gave expression held a view of life, morality, and religion more nearly akin to that of the Prophets than to the pagan mythology of Rome under the Caesars—we can only wonder that Vergil, the Aphrodisian, should ever have been credited with kinship to the Prophets, as he was for centuries. It is true that he wrote of a coming Saviour and of the advent of Peace with him, but the Saviour he looked for was his patron Caesar, "Augustus," who assumed divinity in imitation of the rulers of the East. So far as Vergil had a religion, he worshipped Venus and Mars, the "false gods" of the Prophets, and of Homer. A study of Homer's "gods of the fathers" will show him, here also, not akin to Vergil, but to the Prophets.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RIGHTEOUS GODS, "GODS OF THE FATHERS": ZEUS, ATHENE, APOLLO

ACCORDING to Homer and Hesiod, Zeus, the Father of the Gods and King of Heaven, was a son of Chronos (*Time*), and husband to various consorts, whom he had chosen wisely and well in the main. Of these, Hera, the special guardian of hearth and home, was his queen; Metis, *Cunning Counsel*, bore him a daughter, *Wisdom*, named Athene; and Leto, a fair Titan of the dark early world, bore him the glorious god of the sun, Apollo, who is light in the moral world as opposed to darkness, and rising out of darkness. Zeus' attendants, who enforced his rule, were Strength and Force, the same who attend all kings since his day, but in the main his rule was beneficent, wise, and just, for when Athene spoke he heeded her and gave her his support, and he seems never to have been at variance with just Apollo. Zeus took action on the right side of a cause eventually, though he sometimes permitted an evil to continue a long while without taking action against it. In one important case we see him delaying action because he wants to grant the prayer of a mother for her child. Homer expresses no doubt of his wisdom, power, and goodness, and in the Homeric epics good men pray to him in their need and are saved by his assistance. Those who injured strangers and those who broke the laws of hospitality, as Paris and the Suitors did, were certain to receive their punishment from Zeus, assisted by his righteous son, Apollo, and his daughter, Athene. "Zeus watches over all men and punishes the transgressor," says the *Odyssey*.

In ages following Homer, critics had much to say against Zeus on the score of his many loves, and Plato and Saint Augustine were agreed that many stories told of him in this time were evil, but in early days, when plural marriages were the rule, as they had been in Israel in the time of the Patriarchs, there would have been no criticism of him on this point. The age following Homer began to feel, also, that Zeus was a tyrant and to hope for a better ruler, a hope

expressed in the myth of Prometheus, *Fore-Thought*, the friend of man, who saved man from destruction at the hands of Zeus and was therefore punished by Zeus with a kind of crucifixion. He saved man, but himself he could not save, and endured physical torture at



ZEUS.

Colossal mask of Carrara marble, found in Otricoli, near Rome, in the eighteenth century. (From a copyrighted carbon photograph published by A. W. Elson & Co., Boston, Mass.)

the hands of Strength and Force so long as the rule of Zeus endured. This myth shows the struggle of a passing order against new ideas and proposed change, in this case, of monarchy against the rising

spirit of democracy, for Prometheus is giving his service *to the people* instead of to the reigning King of Heaven. Such a struggle was going on in Greece before the days of Solon, and that is probably the date of the Prometheus myth. The Zeus of Homer seems not to have been subjected to criticism of this kind by gods or men, and he feels no fear of Prometheus and waning power, for the kings of Homer are not yet trembling on their thrones. Such a myth will rise only when the new democracy is threatening to put kings from their thrones, or when it has succeeded in doing so.

Homer's Zeus was the father of Wisdom in the person of Athene and of Justice and Inspiration in the person of Apollo, but he was neither all-good nor all-powerful, and he was the father of Aphrodite and Ares also, gods gifted with godlike power which they sometimes used for evil, as in the case of Helen and the Trojans in the war. Zeus sided against them and administered to Aphrodite a mild admonition to recall her to her good purposes, "Not for thee, my child, are given the works of war; but follow thou after the loving tasks of wedlock." To Ares, his rebuke was not so gentle, as we have seen.

The minor gods of Olympus are spirits that move mankind, sometimes good, sometimes evil, analogous in a general way to angels—if poets and prophets are to talk of the truths of the spirit they must resort to some such figurative or allegorical means to express their ideas. As Michael, Raphael, and Ariel are good spirits, angels, but Satan, Beelzebub, and Belial are bad spirits, devils, though God created them good, so Apollo was good, the god of light, and Athene was good, the goddess of wisdom, while Ares and Aphrodite were bad and led men to ruin. The parallel between the Greek and the Hebrew must not however, be carried too far. In Zeus, good and evil were still combined, while in Jehovah the source of evil was not, at least, explicit; the Greek was pantheist, the Hebrew, deist.

"Glorious Apollo," as he is called in Homer, was represented by the Greeks as a radiant youth at the early period of manhood when ideals are still untarnished by contact with the sordid world; but, at the same time, he was a god of exceeding power, the Archer, mighty in combat, slayer of Python, the great snake of evil. If his name is derived, as has been suggested, from *ἀπ-δλλύω*, *I destroy utterly*, it is appropriate to his character as god of the sun and Archer of the Silver Arrows, for just as the sun pours his beams down upon the earth, causing physical carrion to decay and purifying the earth of its contagion, so Apollo purifies the moral world by shooting his arrows of retribution at those who do wrong. He

is the god of justice, poetic justice, as he showed himself, for instance, in the case of Orestes, whom he judged to be right in killing his mother, Clytemnestra, because she had betrayed and treacher-



THE APOLLO BELVEDERE

ously killed his father, Agamemnon. The expression of stern power in the face of the Apollo Belvedere is appropriate to this Archer—he has just shot one of his arrows of punishment and is looking

upon the pain it has brought to the guilty. Those who are glad that this world has a moral order must rejoice in this stern beauty.

The best lives of ancient Greece were ruled according to Apollo's laws, graven in the marble of his temple, "Know thyself," and "All things in proportion," or "All things in restraint." These were commandments which, if obeyed as to riches and power, would correct most of the wrongs of the world. The shrines of Apollo at Delos and at Delphi became the centers of pilgrimage for Greece.

Homer's Apollo was not the patron of the powerful kings and warriors who sought worldly advantage, and he judged men not as the world in general judges, but according to his own high standard. The special patron of Achilles was Hephaestus, who rewarded his worshipper with the cunningly wrought shield of gold and silver which he made on his forge; the special patron of Menelaus was Ares, an arrant coward when put to the test and easily defeated by those who fight with the sword of the higher ideals—the rewards he gives will be the plunder of cities; the special patron of Odysseus was Athene, and her reward to even this greatest of her votaries is wingless victory, not the greatest riches or power, but moderate, along with contentment in his human lot and the favor of the gods. This kind of victory has no wings and will remain with him. But Apollo was the special patron of the Blind Bard, a man without material possessions, and even without a home, for the poet's home is the whole world of the spirit, and he holds himself as only the instrument to give voice to the song that Apollo sends through the Muse. To the Blind Bard, and to other artists who render Apollo heartfelt devotion the god will not give material rewards—only a crown of wild olive, symbolical of the greater glory that a man may win in the realm of pure spirit, exactly the opposite from the rewards of Hephaestus, but with this, high joy in his work.

In Homer's poems did the archer god of the silver bow punish men justly when they had done wrong, and reward them justly when they had done right? Paris and Aegisthus and the Suitors all suffered punishment, death, because they did not regard the laws of the gods or the rights of other men; so also the Trojans did, for permitting a great wrong to exist among them and for protecting the wrongdoer; but Odysseus and all of his household who obeyed the laws of the gods, and who offered sacrifices and prayers to the gods, received protection in their need and ended life happy. Their religion was largely that of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but the gods demanded rigid justice, and even mercy—Odysseus stayed his hand from punishing the Suitors when he re-

turned until he had seen with his own eyes the wrong that each had done, and until he had given every man a final chance to mend his ways. If any should show at the last that he repented the wrong and intended to do right in the future, if any should show a will to be merciful to the beggar and the suppliant in their midst—who was, as Fate willed it, Odysseus himself—Odysseus would pardon him. The gods punished those who refused to show mercy, as when Apollo punished Agamemnon because he refused to take ransom for the priest's daughter; Achilles mutilated Hector's dead body and dragged it behind his chariot, but when aged King Priam humbled himself and came to offer a ransom for it, Zeus sent a warning to Achilles that if he refused to do this mercy he would be condemned by the gods, and punished.

In the *Iliad*, Apollo is active sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other, but this does not argue that he does not give his assent to the punishment of Troy in this war. He treats individuals always according to their deserts, and in doing this he does not change the final award of victory to the Greeks and punishment to the Trojans. He is never neutral, and he never supports a person who is base. He punishes Paris and Helen, but he also punishes the greatest of warriors in battle, Achilles, who fights on the other side, dimming his glory, hindering his progress, taking the field against him in person, and finally putting it into the mind of cowardly Paris to shoot him in the heel—this is the only way to spoil Achilles' chance in future combats, and the appropriate way to kill him, for no man can outrun him, not even Hector, so he can avoid conflict and save himself whenever he wants to do so.

Why should Apollo be so against Achilles but that Achilles is a man of low ideals, whose patron is Hephaestus, god of the forge and of things? Achilles does not fight for his cause, but for his reward, and he would ruin the chance of his nation in a righteous war in order to satisfy his own personal anger against his superior officer, in case his reward were withheld. Admitting that Agamemnon was unjust to Achilles, and punishing Agamemnon for being so, Apollo judges Achilles also wanting and punishes him, not only on the field of combat and by death, but also by his tarnished fame, for the Muse does not move the Blind Bard to celebrate him as the greatest of the warriors at Troy, though he is conceded to be first in running and in personal combat. He was no tortoise (the name *Achilles* seems to be derived from ἀ-χέλος, *no tortoise*), but he lacked the best qualities of the ideal warrior,

which Odysseus and Diomedes had, namely, wisdom and inspiration by a high ideal.

Apollo does not love Achilles, though Achilles triumphs; he does love Hector, though Hector meets defeat. Apollo could not prolong Hector's life or give his cause victory, but he can and does give him honor throughout his life, and an eternal fame. It is one of the high things in this poem that Homer, inspired by Apollo, does Trojan Hector full justice though he judges the Trojan cause wrong.

Athene does not take the attitude toward Achilles that Apollo does, but assists him in every way. When Achilles is quarreling with Agamemnon and lays his hand on his weapon to threaten the king, Athene comes to his side and stops him—in her view he might be killed if he went farther, and it would not be wise for her to lose a man who is fighting on her side though he be far from high-minded. She is a very practical person and often herself resorts to means not the highest, as when she practises deceit and tells falsehoods, and compliments Odysseus for doing the same. Apollo would never do that.

Wisdom, in Odysseus, required that he should practise deceit and tell falsehoods, and he was extremely clever in his lying, so clever that when he told Athene a long story that had not one word of truth, she complimented him upon it by telling him that she could not have done it better herself! She had come to him in the form of a stranger, and he had cautiously tried to hide his identity for a time. In justice to him, it must not be forgotten that desperate men were watching for his return, intending to waylay him and put him to death before he should enter his own door, and that he was using the only means that could save him.

Those were wild times, and we shall have to admit some worse defects in Homer's hero than his lying. He was a pirate, as were his companion kings and his men at arms, who all "made" their wealth by the simple process of taking it from weak possessors, considering it more honorable to live upon the wealth produced by others than to produce wealth for themselves. It is no excuse for Odysseus that most of the so-called Christian wars, including most of the Crusades, have had a motive of riches, though this design was usually cleverly hidden by those who were to profit—in the Great War of 1914 it is a pathetic fact that the men in the armies of every side had been made to believe that their country's cause was just. We can say for Odysseus that he was no hypocrite, but

an honest pirate, and that the gods of Olympus had not forbidden such warfare. In his day the ideas of right and wrong that shall apply to all men and in all places had not been generally accepted among the men of the Mediterranean, and he could glory in the strength of the arm that enriched him without fear of being criticized on moral grounds even by the men he despoiled—they would have done the same to him if they had been able. Certainly modern imperialists will have no quarrel with him. To his credit, also, we may count it that his men understood what they were fighting for, that they were not conscripts, but volunteers, and that he shared generously with them the booty that was captured. His was no case of setting the men to do the dangerous fighting while he safely reaped the material rewards, and he was not an imperial financier, or a profiteer. He will stand comparison to his advantage with war-makers of our generation whom the world has called great, on most of the counts. Being a pre-Christian pagan, Odysseus lived by what theologians call common grace, and perhaps because of his benighted state he was not tempted to play the hypocrite as are those of our generation who have clear vision and higher ideals, but along with these an overpowering impulse for other people's possessions and a good chance to put money in their purse by starting war. Is it something toward restoring our self-respect that hypocrisy is a concession to the ideal, and therefore something to rejoice in even if cataclysms of war should continue to occur? Or is it the more of a reproach to us in modern times and of the Christian Dispensation that we have added a new sin to the old pagan ones? The lying of Odysseus was not so vicious as modern hypocrisy, but then, Odysseus never faced the problems of the modern world. There seems to have been no conflict between his religious theories and his practice; his faith in his gods guided his life, nerved him to fight at tremendous odds and to gain victory in the conviction that he was sustained by Wisdom and by Justice.

Perhaps we should say, "by Wisdom, if not always by Justice," for there is one passage in the *Odyssey* in which Homer, and Apollo, are seen not to approve of pirates, such as Odysseus has been and the other kings still are. It is that in which "noble Eu-maeus," as Homer calls him, the slave and swineherd who tries to do right in all things, as his name assures us, *εὖ, well, μάτοιατι, try,* says to Odysseus in their talk at the lodge:

"Reckless deeds the blessed gods love not; they honor justice and man's upright deeds. Why, evil-minded cruel men who land on a foreign shore, and Zeus allows them plunder so that they sail back home with well-filled ships—even on the hearts of such falls a great fear of heavenly wrath."

The artistic fiction that Odysseus then proceeds to tell the good old man as to his past seems to acknowledge the point that Eumaeus has been making, for it shows that Zeus had brought all of his piratical expeditions to naught—at one time Zeus thundered, and wrecked the ship; at another, Zeus struck his men with terror in the midst of an attack that they were making, but encouraged those whom they were fighting, so that his men were destroyed and he would have perished himself but for the protection of the king, to whom he became a suppliant. It is not without significance in this connection that the riches which Odysseus brings back with him to Ithaca are gifts, not spoils of war, and that he undertakes a journey to placate the god of the sea, Poseidon, after his return, but makes no more raids. Does not the *Odyssey* mark the time in the moral evolution of Greece when those who serve Apollo are teaching that wars of aggression and for possessions are wrong?

In this incident at the lodge, it is the noble slave, Eumaeus, and not kingly Odysseus, whom the Blind Bard, inspired by Apollo, is giving the highest honor, and Homer becomes so moved with enthusiasm that he abandons the narrative form and breaks into apostrophe in telling the story: "Then, Swineherd Eumaeus, you answered him and said." Is he not saying, in a concrete example, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, and those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, and those who make for peace"? Homer can not be awarded the glory of having formulated the Beatitudes, but he should be accorded the glory of having at least a vision, a vision in which the mighty on their thrones were not exalted, but those of low degree who *tried well*.

Was Odysseus dear to Apollo as well as to Athene, though in a lesser degree? We may infer that he was, from the fact that Apollo showed grace to Odysseus when he stopped at Delos on his way to Troy to offer Apollo a sacrifice—Odysseus never failed to offer fit sacrifice to the gods of his devotion. When he meets Nausicaä at the washing-pool after his shipwreck and asks her assistance, he tells her how the god, at Delos, gave him courage and comfort by showing him a vision: beside the altar, a fair young palm sprang up before his eyes, and this is interpreted to mean that a fair young maid will be sent to aid him in his hour of direst need. When Nausicaä gives him the needed assistance, all is fulfilled as the god foretold.

Another point in proof that Odysseus was dear to Apollo is the fact that Apollo inspired the Blind Bard at the palace of Alcinoüs to sing the Song of the Destruction of Troy, giving praise to Odys-

seus as the one who, under Athene, brought the war to a close. It was poetically fit that the Blind Bard should do this without knowing that the hero he sang was the honored guest at this banquet. Perhaps Apollo rewarded Odysseus thus, and at once, because he had just done an act of the gentlest courtesy to the Blind Bard, cutting a piece of the choicest meat with his own hand and sending it to him by a page. An act of appreciation like this shows the innermost heart of a man better than his great public deeds, and Apollo will rate this kindness at its true value and reward it, as surely as he punished Agamemnon for not heeding the plea of a humble priest. Odysseus seems to have been the opposite of Agamemnon in consideration of the humble priests who served Apollo, for we are told that "through holy fear" he protected the priest Evanthes, his wife, and his son. For this act, also, Apollo rewarded him richly, for the gift which Evanthes gave him in gratitude became the means by which Odysseus was saved at another desperate moment in his career—it was that very delicious, dark, sweet wine that Evanthes gave him with which he intoxicated Polyphemus, and thereby escaped from the man-eater's cave. Because he served the god of light, it was poetically just that it should be given him to break the power of this monster of darkness, who devoured wayfarers and suppliants when they were his guests. The reward that Apollo gave to Odysseus after his kindness to the Blind Bard was also fit—a song, an immaterial thing, but one that had the power to move the hearts of virtuous Queen Arete, King Alcinoüs, the wise counsellors and the people of the Phaeacians to honor Odysseus, give him rich gifts, and assist him on his way home. Also, that song will give fame which will last as long as time shall endure. . . . No small thing is Apollo's gift of a song!

Homer, who also was a Blind Bard inspired by Apollo and the Muse, enshrined in this story other acts that Odysseus did, little things, which prove him a man of the kindest heart as well as of Wisdom. Among these was his treatment of his slaves, his kind old nurse and his swineherd. How Homer, and the god Apollo, love the "noble swineherd, Eumaeus"! and what a true king among men they have shown him to be!

From highest to lowest, all who were good loved Odysseus; his mother died of grief at his absence, his devoted old dog died of joy when he heard the returned master's voice. "Your wise ways, glorious Odysseus, and your tenderness—the longing for you took joyous life away," said his mother to him brokenly when he made his descent into Hades; the love of his poor old dog, Argo, drew



THE ATHENE OF PEACE.

tears from Odysseus' eyes, eloquent of what he had been to his dog, and why he was worthy, not only in the sight of Father Zeus and Athene, but also in that of Apollo.

The epic, an oracle in song, was inspired by Apollo, and the Blind Bard knew that all of his power was from this great god: "Sing, O Muse," is his prayer, not "Help *me* to sing," making himself nothing, or only an instrument in the hands of the god. An empty form in many other writers, the invocation to the Muse is a sincere and humble prayer in Homer, and is followed by incidents deeply religious, showing the ways of gods to men. In the *Iliad*, the first incident shows how Apollo punished the king, Agamemnon, for refusing to heed the prayer of the poor priest in behalf of his daughter, who was a captive of war held by the king; in the *Odyssey*, the first incident shows the gods in council approving Athene's plan to help Odysseus return to his home and approving the punishment that Orestes, Agamemnon's young son, has just given Aegisthus, who wickedly wooed a wife and helped her to kill her husband.

In Apollo, the god of the sun, Grecian mythology touched a height sublime. Apollo was the son by whom Zeus gave light to the world, the light of justice and inspiration, by which man rises above his brute estate. With the help of the Muses, men can transcend mere mortals, in the arts, and can create, like the gods, great works which will not die. The Greeks did not make the mistake, common in darkened ages, of thinking that morals and religion have nothing to do with art. Their word *ἀπεύ*, from which our word *art* is made, meant a *fitting, or joining together*, and applied to painting, poetry, drama, sculpture, architecture—all of the high arts presided over by Apollo and the Sacred Nine. But while they used the word to apply to things made of words, sounds, marble, or any other material *fitted or joined together* with beauty, they never forget that these beautiful things were also true and good, for their inspiration was from Apollo, the god of the sun, and everything less than true and good was unthinkable as emanating from him. Just as the sun pours down his beams upon the earth, giving light, which is the condition of life, so through the Muses Apollo lighted the minds of his chosen *artists* and warmed their hearts with *en-thusiasm*, *έν* and *θεός*, which means *god-within*, for the exaltation of spirit that man feels when the True and the Good are crowned with Beauty, they recognized as god-given. Our word *poet*, also derived from the Greek, meant *maker, or creator*, and honored the maker of song by comparing him with the Divine Creator, for his work also is a thing

of pure spirit, and at its best is immortal, as Homer's is. It is the true poet who becomes an instrument in the hands of the god to waken men to a sense of the good to be attained and justice to be rendered. Out of the heart are the issues of life, and the poet's appeal is from the *god-within* himself to the *god-within* other hearts, and so is fundamental. True poets, who ennobled and uplifted men, were leaders among the Greeks, and "poetic justice" was recognized as perfect and to be acted on, as in the Code of Solon. "Oh, that is poetry," says our blind time, and continues to pay the price of injustice and unwisdom. By a living faith in Apollo's justice and Athene's wisdom Homer's hero took courage to fight single-handed the hundreds of desperate Suitors who threatened his home, and he won; by faith in the wisdom and justice of his gods Athenian Solon, called the Wise and the Just and therefore selected by his people to do this political work for them, wrote the code that made Athens a democracy and brought her her Golden Age; by faith in Athene and Apollo, little Athens dared to defend herself against giant Persia at fearful odds, and saved herself and the Western World by her victory at Marathon and Salamis—Davids against Goliaths!

In the myths of wise Athene and just Apollo, and in the wonders they wrought in Athenian life, one must admit that the Grecian religion was earnest and noble, especially in the periods before great riches and imperial ambitions had tarnished the national ideals, before Hephaestus and Ares had become the gods of devotion to practical purposes.

By "the gods of the fathers" men were offered salvation on condition that they obey, and were visited with punishment in this world and the next if they did not keep the commandments—in fact, Greek paganism was far from being the easy and lax religion that it has been thought. In the Apollonian period it was dark, offering little hope to even the best of men and showing many instances of trials and tragic fates that the good had been made to endure because some of the gods themselves were unwise and ill-intentioned. Witness the case of Odysseus wandering, of Oedipus blind, and of Prometheus tortured. Only a mistaken interpretation, from a lax and degenerate period, as the late Greek, the Roman and the Italian Renaissance, could justify the opinion that the Greeks held their religion lightly and thought little of family ties. In the early period, even the loves of the gods were not the *chronique scandaleuse* that some of the critics take them to be, but conveyed

the best thought of their time. In the *Odyssey*, the gods are in their heaven beyond question, and punish those who do wrong in the world. . . . I was about to say, *especially* in the home, for the *Odyssey* is a story of happy and unhappy homes, and every person who violates the home is punished by Zeus and Athene and Apollo—God, in his Wisdom and Justice.

Aphrodite, the destroyer of homes, is "laughter-loving," according to Homer's epithet, but Athene is nobly serious, a patron of the useful arts, as that of the loom and the needle, and giver of the fruitful olive; Aphrodite is held lightly among the immortals and is distrusted by wise men and women, but Athene is able to turn all wise minds to her purposes. Aphrodite brings ruin to her devotees and those who give them protection; but Athene protects her own. Her tongue is a spear, even when she talks with Father Zeus, and sometimes by pleading, sometimes with sarcasm, she wins their cause for her votaries. So, having wisely bided her time, she skilfully turns the attention of Zeus to the plight of worthy Odysseus at the council and persuades him to take up this cause, changing the subject from Aegisthus, who has been justly punished, to Odysseus, who has been unjustly prevented from reaching his home:

"Our Father, son of Chronos, most high above all rulers, that man [Aegisthus] assuredly lies in fitting ruin! So perish all who do such deeds! But now my heart is torn for wise Odysseus. He, hapless man, long cut off from friends, longing but to see the smoke springing from his land, desires to die. Did not Odysseus seek your favor by offering sacrifice upon the plains of Troy? Then why are you so wroth against him, Zeus?"

Then answered her cloud-gathering Zeus, and said:

"My child, what word has passed the barrier of your teeth? How could I ever forget kingly Odysseus, who is beyond all mortal men in wisdom, beyond them too in giving honor to the immortal gods who hold the open sky? . . . Come, let us all here plan for his return."

It was skillfully done! and we note that her considerations for Odysseus as against Aegisthus are moral, and religious.

Athene is the goddess of those who love wisely and who protect wise love, such as Odysseus and his Penelope, and she must punish such as Paris and Helen and the Trojans who shelter them, for if the unwise should continue to prosper, the world would go wrong. Her character is admirably shown in the incident of the Palladium, her statue of olive wood, which she gave as a reward to the Trojans when they were true to her, many years before the Trojan War, along with her promise that she would protect their city so long as this statue was within their walls. The Trojans had prized this Palladium, or image of Wisdom, as their most precious

possession, but now when they turned to give protection to devotees of Aphrodite and forsook this goddess of their fathers, her anger rose hot against them, and it was she who delivered them into the hands of their spoilers. She led the Greeks to besiege their city, she prompted Odysseus (who was the man after her own heart) to oppose Agamemnon at the council when Agamemnon unwisely proposed to give up the siege and go home, and she led Odysseus to adopt the stratagem of the Wooden Horse to gain entry within the walls of Troy. Finally, when the Grecian chiefs were within the walls, it was she who led them to lay hands on her guardian statue and carry it out of her temple and beyond the gates, for she must hold to her promise that so long as the Trojans had that statue their city would be safe. When the cry went up in Troy that the Palladium was no longer in the temple, the Trojans gave up all hope of Athene's protection, and their city fell. To the letter, Athene fulfilled her promise, but she also punished the Trojans as they deserved. They had chosen the laughter-loving Aphrodite in folly—they had it to repent in blood and tears in the ashes of their homes; they had defended the unfaithful wife and her tempter—they saw their own true wives and daughters led away as captives when Troy fell.

So the prophecy of Apollo came true, and Troy fell because of Paris, delivered into the hands of spoilers that spoiled her. The Archer shot true.

## CHAPTER V

### HISTORY AND HISTORICITY

THOSE who serve Apollo in any age will body forth the ideal, but they may show the real, even when it is evil, to throw what is good into a more effective light, perhaps to introduce a contrast. So they may use the actual, or historic fact along with allegory or myth. Literal truth, of course, has nothing to do with Apollo, except as it carries ideal truth, a point which Saint Augustine appreciated when he said that he did not accept Christianity because of its historic facts, but because of its myths, meaning by that, the ideal truths that they carry. To him it did not matter whether the Bible stories were, or were not, literally true, but it was enough that they carried the highest ideal or spiritual truth. The greatest poets, as Homer and Dante, have used historical material in their poems when this served their purposes, and questions of history and historicity become important in both only as throwing light on the poet's meaning.

As to Troy and Helen, all ages have had their doubts. The excavations of Schliemann proved that an ancient city existed in primitive times on the spot that he investigated in Asia Minor, having located it by means of such points as he found in Homer's poems, the citadel, the river, the washing-pools and the sea; but that it was called by the name *Troy* has never been proved.

As to the reasons for the destruction of that city, all ages have had their doubts, and the question seems to have been a live issue in the time of Herodotus (484-420? B.C.). When Herodotus visited Egypt, four centuries after Homer, he asked the priests of Memphis whether all that Homer told of the Trojan War was to be regarded as fable and received the reply that it was, for the sufficient reason that Paris did not abduct Helen to Troy and so the Greeks did not pursue her there to bring her back. Their reason for holding this opinion as to Troy was that Paris had brought her to Memphis instead! Herodotus concludes his observations on Paris and Helen thus:

With regard to Helen, I assent entirely to the opinion of the Egyptian priests, and for the following reasons: If the princess had been in Troy, they would certainly have returned her to the Greeks no matter whether Alexander had agreed or opposed. Priam and the princes of the royal family could not have been so deprived of all sense as to sacrifice themselves along with their children and their city merely to secure the possession of Helen to Alexander.

The reason for the destruction of the burned city which Schliemann excavated was doubtless political, at bottom economic—it has been suggested that the king of that city had levied too high tolls on the Grecian ships that passed to bring grain from the plains bor-

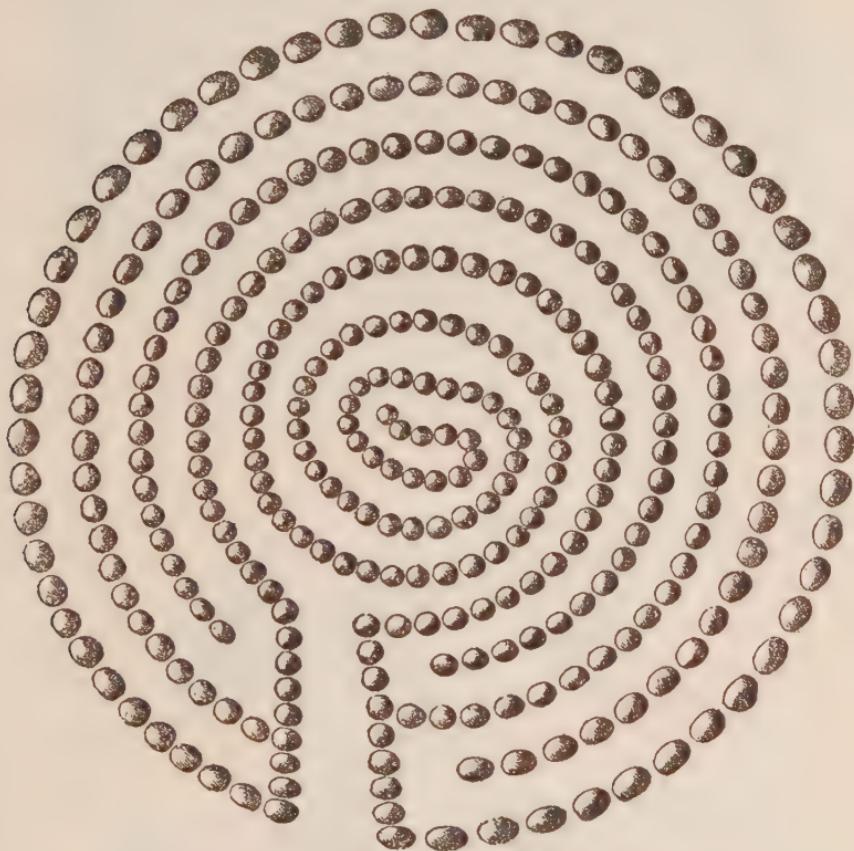


TROJABURG AT WISBY, GOTLAND  
(After K. Braun's *Wisbyfahrt*, Leipsic, 1882, p. 120)

dering on the Black Sea or gold from the auriferous rivers, where it had been gathered from the earliest ages by the primitive method of catching it in fleeces thrown into the water, a fact which gave local coloring to the myth of the Golden Fleece.

As Homer localized the plot of Paris and Helen in the burned city that Schliemann excavated, so it seems now most likely that he attached to it also the name *Troy*, a hated name which had been widely used in all Aryan countries for the labyrinth where the Win-

ter Demon imprisons the Shining One, the Sun Princess, *Helen*—for the name *Helen* is cognate with that of *Helios*, the sun. Cognates with Troy are found in *Druh*, *Druja*, *Draogha*, *Troja*, *Troy*, the name used for the Winter Demon among Hindus, Persians, Slavs, and Northern nations. The names of both Helen and Troy would argue a connection of Homers' story with the sun myth, which was the possession of the Aryans from the North to India, who



STONE LABYRINTH ON THE ISLAND OF WIER, RUSSIA  
(After E. V. Baer's drawing in *Bulletin de l'académie de St. Pétersbourg*, 1844)

practised sun dances from the earliest times. This is clear from the remains of the structures which were made for these rites. In Russia is one of the most perfect. England has many remains and pictures on sandstone, representing the lair of Winter, called *Troy-Towns*, and in Scotland also these are numerous. In central and southern Europe many like structures are found, usually called *labyrinths*, and all so intricate as to justify the legend that it would



FRAGMENT OF SCULPTURED STONE FROM THE TOP OF  
WHITSUNBANK HILL, NORTHUMBERLAND



ROCK SCULPTURES OF AUCHNABREAC, SCOTLAND  
(After Sir J. Lubbock and Sir J. Y. Simpson)

take a long time to rescue a person imprisoned in them. At Cnossus (Crete) the labyrinth became the national symbol and was used on coins.



OLD COIN OF CNOSSUS (CRETE)

In Rome, a Troy dance was celebrated in very ancient times; and in Tuscany such dances must have been celebrated as early as the seventh century B. C., of which fact the proof is a pitcher lettered in the earliest Etruscan characters and discovered at Tragliatella, a Tuscan village.

The bands of decoration on the pitcher discovered at Tragliatella show (1) the escaping princess in company with her rescuer, (2) the labyrinth from which they are escaping, (and this looks exactly like the labyrinth on the coin from Crete), (3) a company of dancers moving before them joyfully in procession. Finally, (4) the labyrinth is labelled in Etruscan characters, *TRUIA*, or Troy. This



THE PITCHER OF TRAGLIATELLA

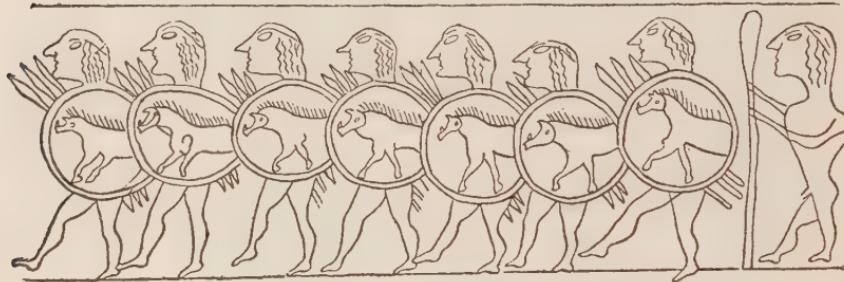
piece of pottery, then, justifies a conclusion that the story of the fall of Troy as Homer tells it was a sun myth in its origin, as scholars have surmised, and the label on the labyrinth proves the connection

of the name of Troy with the sun myth. But the pitcher of Tragliatella proves more than these points, for in another scene it shows a goddess in the act of giving an apple, a man receiving the apple, and a woman whom he holds by the hand, the woman labelled *mi*



RIDERS COMING OUT OF THE "TROJABURG"

(After *Jahrbücher d. röm. Inst.*, Vol. LIII, Plate L)



GROUP OF SEVEN DANCERS

(After Plate L of *Jahrbücher d. archäol. Inst.*, 1881)



SO-CALLED JUDGMENT OF PARIS ON THE PITCHER

*felena, I am, or THIS IS HELEN*, leaving no doubt that the other figures are those of Paris and Aphrodite. It will be concluded, finally, that the maker of this pitcher drew his illustration before people had forgotten the origin of Homer's story in the sun myth and the

connection of the incident of the Apple of Love with the sun myth. It is clear from the discussion of the Trojan story in Herodotus that by his day many of the best-informed people had come to regard the story of the abduction as actual fact, but questioned the place where it had occurred, and that a connection with the sun myth had been forgotten. Perhaps the spring dances had been discontinued in the course of the four hundred years that intervened, or their interpretation had been lost, as is common with festivals, especially before the art of writing has given them something of permanence. Also, Homer may have changed the meaning of the myth so much from its original that the connection was obscured, for his sad return of Helen is quite the opposite of the glad return of the Shining Sun Princess as pictured on the pitcher and in the dance. He shows Helen hated and distrusted for sharing the guilt of Paris, and probably the more active of the two, and the tempter, for in the illustration on the pitcher she is shown leading, and he suggests in her name that she is the seducer, by a pun on *ἔλειν*, the infinitive aorist from the verb *αἴρεω*, meaning *to lead by the hand, to seduce*. Ancient illustrations commonly represented this pair *hand in hand*, with Helen leading—early stories always represent the woman as the temptress, it seems, and all precedents would be broken if Paris were shown as leading.

As fact, or authentic history, then, the two main incidents of Homer, (1) the abduction of Helen and (2) the fall of the city which sheltered her, turn out to be more than doubtful, and to be, instead, such stuff as poets have always made their dreams of, myth, allegory, and high romance, in which can be expressed the loves, the hates, the aspirations, and the convictions of the times.

Is there nothing of historic value, then, in Homer's poems? Helen as a motive for a ten years' siege and the Apple of Love are not in themselves facts, but are evidence of the important facts (1) that the home and family relations were felt to be endangered in Homers' day by false, foreign gods who tempted people into evil ways, especially by Aphrodite, who was Ashtaroth of Israel, Istar of Babylon; and that (2) poets of Apollo in Greece, as well as prophets of Jehovah in Israel, were teaching the people Wisdom as to love and the home, and as to life generally.

It is a fact, also, that the Windy Citadel where Homer localized his story existed as he represented it, and from Schliemann's discoveries there we can see the walls, the pottery, the jewelry, and many

of the articles of daily interest in that prehistoric time. From Schliemann's discoveries at Mycenae, we believe that Agamemnon also was historic, and that he suffered such a death as Homer tells. The local traditions at Mycenae and the traditions that ran through history pointed Dr. Schliemann the way to Agamemnon's tomb, and what he found in the tombs that he unearthed at Mycenae was more than enough to justify the traditions that had lingered through the centuries. It is reasonable to believe also that a king of a neighboring island found his wife faithful to him when he returned from the war after long wanderings, thanks to the clever device she had used to put suitors off, and that she became as a proverb for her wifely fidelity. Such a death as Agamemnon's and such a device as Penelope's are distinctive, hard for a story-teller to invent, and more likely than not to have happened in such ancient, unsettled times and under such circumstances as the war brought about.

But the king whose body lay buried so richly at Mycenae until his tomb was opened by Schliemann cannot have been called *Agamemnon* during his life, and his queen cannot have been called *Clytemnestra* when he married her, for these names are allegorical and apply to the events of their later life—Agamemnon can have been called by that name only after his death:

*Clytemnestra, κλύνο and μνηστήρ, I give ear to a suitor;*

*Agamemnon, ἀγαμός, a fatal marriage, a marriage that is no marriage, and μέμνημαι, I remember, or I recall, referring to the scene in Hades in which this king tells the story of how he was killed on his return from the war.*

Clytemnestra gave ear to her suitor, Aegisthus, and she made Agamemnon's a fatal marriage by killing him. The poet does not even mention the names by which this king and queen were actually called in life, and these allegorical names became fixed upon them to the exclusion of the names to which they had answered, even in their home town, where their tombs were called *Agamemnon's* and *Clytemnestra's* from Homer's day to Schliemann's. The use of these names is proof that the poet used his historic facts as a means to ideal truth, not for their literal value.

Still another fact that bears in upon us as we study the characters and the incidents of Homer is that democracy was rising, and was near at hand. The first evidence of this is the many unusually horrible crimes ascribed to the members of the house of Atreus, to which Agamemnon, Menelaus, and Aegisthus belonged. An exactly parallel case is argued by Saint Augustine in the *City of God*, where he shows that the early kings of Rome did probably not commit

the many unusually horrible crimes ascribed to them, but that at least some of the stories to their discredit were probably started as rumors against them by men of a rising republican party who distrusted kings and were ready to believe the worst against them. When the kings had fallen and the republican party prevailed, these rumors would be passed along as true history. It is a melancholy fact that much of the history that has been given to the world is of this untrustworthy kind, having been written by the victorious party to whiten its own cause and blacken its adversary's. We may well chew upon this profound comment of Saint Augustine's whether we ponder the legendary account of the house of Atreus, or that of Tarquin, or the equally untrustworthy stories that pass as actual history down to the latest times. Men and events should not be judged on the testimony of enemies alone. With this principle in mind, we conclude that the house of Atreus, which seems to have really existed, was probably not so bad as it has been reputed, but that a democratic party, which was forming, and which succeeded in abolishing kings in Greece shortly after Homer's time, made the worst of its members, probably assisted in this work by the great Ionian Bard, who pointed his moral and adorned his tale by painting the Mycenaean and Spartan kings into his story.

Homer might well take the hated house of Mycenae to picture baneful kings, driven to ruin, as an example of what kings ought not to be; he would naturally repeat all that had been told of them by their enemies, and even add artistic shadows of his own to heighten the effect. As his story was mainly romantic and allegorical, it would be nothing against him that he used his facts freely, his theme being general, *good and bad kings, good and bad homes, and good and bad men and women*. As with the names of the individual characters, the allegorical name of this house as a whole is notice on the part of the poet to his hearers and readers that literal truth, or history, is not his purpose. The name *Atreus*, derived from ἀτρηπός, meaning *baneful, driven to ruin*, like the names *Clytemnestra* and *Agamemnon*, would not be used by their friends and supporters in addressing the kings of this house, but might be used by discontented people murmuring against them, in secret so long as the kings continued to rule, openly as soon as the kings had been deposed, or driven out. Or, this name may have been originated by some person of a foreign or hostile State, to express his reaction to the Mycenaean house—so Homer might have originated it himself.

Homer certainly did not hold a theory that kings can do no wrong, witness his Agamemnon, Menelaus, and Priam; and he believed that there might be wise and generous kings, witness his Odysseus, who may be taken as representing what the best king would be. Whether or not Homer believed in kings as an institution and preferable to judges, such as had ruled Israel or such as were to constitute the Court of the Areopagus after his day, is another question.

Odysseus was a king who had the good of his law-abiding people at heart, as we realize when he cared for one of his men who was killed by falling from a housetop as a result of his drinking too much wine. The man was to blame himself for his accident, and it might be looked upon as a judgment of the gods upon him for his foolishness—persons who looked too much upon the wine when it was red were often punished for it in the *Odyssey*, as in the book of Proverbs. So this sailor was punished, and Polyphemus, and the men whom Circe turned into swine, “swine” being allegorical, as with us, for those who eat and drink too much. Though Odysseus was in no wise responsible for this foolish companion, he sailed far out of his way to return to the place where the accident had occurred so as to give the body the rites of burial, for the Greeks believed that if the rites of the dead had not been performed the soul must wander disconsolate, unable to attain forgetfulness by crossing the River. Odysseus protected his men well throughout the journey, counselled them well, and had uncommon patience with them, even with the one who was least wise and loyal and who seemed to be trying to start a mutiny against him. It was not his fault that none of his men returned with him when he finally reached home—they had fallen by the way through their own perversity, having, contrary to his advice, “devoured the kine of the exalted Sun,” that is, committed some sin against the god Apollo.

As Homer shows Odysseus, he is a king after the model of the king commended in Deuteronomy xvii, “his heart not lifted up above his brethren,” “not turning aside from the Commandments to the right hand or the left”; and of him Athene, Wisdom, might say, as was written of Abraham, “I know him, that he will command his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do judgment.” His ideal as a ruler is that of the judges and officers of Israel, expressed in Deuteronomy xvi, “They shall judge the people with just judgment”; and in practice he is shown very deliberate and cautious in collecting evidence before he forms his judgment against evildoers. He is even generous in giving the

Suitors and the guilty servants a last chance to mend their ways. Where his people "do keep the way of the Lord," as his good slave, the swineherd Eumeus does, Odysseus is humanly warm and kind, "as man to man," and democratic if the fact of slavery could be forgotten—if he had lived in the time of Solon, the transition to a true democracy would not have been so hard for him as for kings of the type of Menelaus and Agamemnon.

However, Odysseus was far from being democratic, and Homer shows just how far in the incident where men of the common people presume to voice their opinion on public policies when an assembly has been called. As king to king, Odysseus has rebuked Agamemnon sternly and has opposed his policy, for Agamemnon has proposed to give up the siege and go home:

"Atreus' son, what word has passed the barrier of thy lips! Man of mischief, sure thou shouldst lead some other inglorious army, not be king among us. . . . Be silent, lest some other of the Achaeans hear thy word, that no man should so much as suffer to pass from his mouth. . . . And now I wholly scorn thy thoughts, such words as thou hast uttered, that thou, in the midst of war and battle dost bid us draw down the well-timbered ships to the sea, that more than ever the Trojans should possess their desire . . . and sheer destruction fall upon us."

All of the chieftains, as well as the kings, were permitted to speak their minds freely on this question, and even the youngest, Diomedes, opposed the king in the council, "where it is right to do so." It is clear that within that narrow circle, democracy had almost arrived.

But the common people were prevented from speaking, and by Odysseus:

Wherever man of the people he saw and found him shouting, he drove him with his sceptre and chode him with loud words: "Good sir, sit still, and hearken to the words of others that are thy betters; thou art no warrior, but a weakling, never reckoned whether in battle or in council. In no wise can the Achaeans all be kings here. A multitude of masters is no good thing. Let there be one master, one king, to whom the Son of Chronos hath granted it."

Among those men of the people whom Odysseus found shouting and silenced, was Thersites, who was criticizing Agamemnon hotly and advising his companions to take him at his word and return home, his points against the king being that he was discontented though he lacked nothing, that his tents were full of bronze and of women captives taken by the army, and that he would "gorge himself with meed of honors" but would not give due honor to those who fought for him, as to Achilles and the common soldiers. These

charges were all justified, as Homer's story shows, and from our democratic point of view and that of democratic Athens, Thersites was right in his opinion of Agamemnon and of kings in general. Perhaps this speech was the more irritating to Odysseus because it was true, and because it might, if followed by free discussion, lead the army to give up the siege. His own motive was higher than that of Agamemnon, but he did not propose to discuss that matter, made no reply to the charges that Thersites made, and resorted to insults and blows instead:

Looking sternly at him, goodly Odysseus came straight to his side and with hard words rebuked him: "Thersites, reckless of words, shrill orator though thou art, refrain thyself, nor aim to strive singly against kings. For I deem that no mortal is baser than thou of all that with the sons of Atreus came from Ilios. Therefore were it well that thou shouldst not have kings in thy mouth as thou talkest, and utter revilings against them and be on thy watch for departure. . . . But I will tell thee plain, and what I say shall even be brought to pass: If I find thee again raving as now thou art, then may Odysseus' head no longer abide upon his shoulders, nor may I any more be called father of Telemachus, if I take thee not and strip from thee thy garments, thy mantle and tunic that cover thy nakedness, and for thyself send thee weeping to the swift ships, and beat thee out of the assembly with shameful blows."

So spake he, and with his staff smote Thersites' back and shoulders; and he bowed down and a big tear fell from him, and a bloody weal stood up from his back beneath the golden sceptre.

Then he sat down and was amazed and in pain with helpless look wiped away the tear. But the rest, though they were sorry, laughed lightly at him, and thus would one speak, looking at another standing by: "Go to, . . . never again, forsooth, will this proud soul henceforth bid him revile the kings with slanderous words."

"The more 'tis the truth, sir, the more 'tis a libel," as Robert Burns wrote of a parallel case centuries later. The speakers who agreed with Odysseus that day that Thersites had "slandered" the kings, agreed on other occasions probably, and on the quiet, with Thersites in criticizing Odysseus. When they came to reflect on it, they would realize that Thersites had not been more "reckless in words" than Achilles had been in the council, and that Odysseus himself had told Agamemnon truths bitterer than Thersites had spoken. Achilles had laid his hand on his sword to threaten the king, while he called him "folk-devouring king," making the same charge that Thersites made, and more vigorously. This epithet "folk-devouring" implies that he stood with the people against Agamemnon. Not restraining himself from a feeling that majesty hedges a king, Achilles proceeded, "Thou heavy with wine, dog-faced and deer-hearted" (and this, in round terms, would mean *sot, brute* and

*coward*), "thou shalt tear the heart within thee that thou didst in no wise honor the best of the Achaeans." Then he put his threat into execution by sulking in his tent and refusing to fight thereafter, although his services were sadly needed and many men of the Grecian army were to die because of his withdrawing. For this, Agamemnon did not punish him, and Odysseus did not punish him—only Apollo punished him, not because he had opposed the king, but because he had considered his own wrongs and his material reward rather than the high cause that his nation had espoused. The sons of Atreus were given titular honor, and Homer calls Agamemnon "goodly" and "shepherd of the host" . . . where Achilles calls him "folkdevouring" and many incidents show what a baneful king he is to his people and his army, can it be that the poet uses "goodly" and "shepherd" in the spirit of Erasmus, with ironic praise of folly? Throughout the epics, he calls him also "baneful, driven to ruin," which would make him out to be a poor "shepherd," and far from "goodly"!

This incident of Thersites murmuring against the king and beaten for it, is evidence that a democratic spirit was rising in Homer's time, among the people, but was being repressed with violence. When Odysseus beat Thersites into silence, this was not refutation, though it might pass as such for the moment with thoughtless people, especially because the man who administered the beating held a reputation of being unusually wise and just, but as time passed those same thoughtless people would come to understand that Odysseus had prevailed by one of his many wiles over their spokesman, who had been right in the main, telling some wholesome truths about Agamemnon. At the worst, Thersites had been more nearly right than Agamemnon was, and showed a nobler spirit, though not appreciation of the great issues that Athene, and Apollo, and great Odysseus were fighting out at Troy.

As one reads this whole passage, one doubts whether Homer himself was not in his deepest heart with Thersites, although he admired Odysseus greatly and thought that one such king might redeem several of the type of Menelaus and Agamemnon. As between Odysseus and Thersites, Homer is doubtless with Odysseus, but as between Agamemnon and Thersites? . . . He pictured the sons of Atreus too well to let us think that he believed in monarchy under such baneful and ruinous kings. A rapid succession of blunders and conscious wrongs is Agamemnon's reign, with hardly a point to the good. He is incompetent, as he is generally unworthy. How demoralizing, for him to propose to the soldiers to launch the

ships and return to Greece, before the matter had even been discussed in council! How foolish, to call an assembly late in the day, when the young soldiers would have dulled their judgment by heavy drinking! This, just after he alienated his foremost soldier by doing him an injustice, and that just after he had brought pestilence on his army by wronging a priest of Apollo! How disastrous for him to quarrel with Menelaus on the way home, and to sail a separate course, resulting in the dispersal of the ships and consequent loss of many!

That Thersites had dared to speak against the king showed a stirring of the spirit in Greece which was soon to result in the deposition of kings in Greece, a spirit that had been killed in the East, and that was crude and rude, but full of hope for the future. This we can readily see in the light of Athenian history following Homer, in which a wider and wider democracy led to the Golden Age, proving the truth that rule by a wise and just people is better than rule by kings. Was Homer blind to this hope? Did he put rock-bottom truths into the mouth of this bad-mannered, ill-tempered, bandy-legged and generally crossed and mal-formed commoner as a kind of last warning to kings to be worthy of their charge or prepare to descend from their thrones? . . . He had shown that the council was wiser than the king and reversed his decision. . . . The day of the common man had not yet come among the Homeric Greeks, but it was far on the way when men even whispered such truths as Thersites had uttered, when a great poet repeated them, having shown them justified by the facts, and when men felt a stirring of pity for the poor wretch who had spoken, though at first they laughed when they heard him ridiculed and saw him beaten, as Thersites had been by Odysseus. In this case, as always, the blood and tears of the martyrs is the seed that will ripen later on. A generation after Homer, Grecian kings were displaced by a council of judges (in Athens, the Council of Areopagus), and reading Homer with this coming change in mind we see the Homeric council as the nearly completed first stage toward democracy. In Thersites, we see the rise of the Mountain, which, under the guidance of Solon, a century later, will mark the completion of the next stage.

In an age when people had begun to criticize their kings, Homer's drawing of Menelaus and Agamemnon, the sons of Atreus, must have been a strong factor in the democratizing process, helping to disillusionize the people as to their "heaven-descended kings." If Grecian kings had been less like Menelaus and Agamemnon and more like Odysseus, the monarchies might have lasted longer. If

monarchies had continued, it is very unlikely that they would have sunk into despotisms like those of the East, for Homer's Odysseus would have served as the model to which the kings would have to approximate. Princes would consciously or unconsciously emulate him, knowing that their people would judge them according to how well or how ill they succeeded. Thus, Homer is seen to be one of the bards that outranked kings, a truth-teller and leader of both kings and people to a higher life, under Apollo, and, thanks to Apollo, the dispenser of just retribution to all, from swineherds to kings, with no mitigation of judgment to kings because of their higher rank. Homeric monarchy was approaching democracy because, in the realm of the poet, where Apollo was king, a good and just slave, like Eumaeus (*εὖ* and *μαίομαι*, Try-Well), the swineherd, is judged higher than the less wise and the unjust kings. This slave does not take his servitude slavishly; but, in complete independence of judgment, guides his master and king, Odysseus, into the better way. Would he obey if his master commanded him to do an evil thing?

In the incident at the swineherd's cottage, where Odysseus visits him disguised as a beggar, Eumaeus says, and Odysseus admits, that piracy is wrong, though Odysseus, as well as the other kings, has waged piratical wars for profit. This speech of "noble Eumaeus," as Homer calls him, is both wise and just in what he says about the war-makers of his time, and what he says makes for peace among men:

"Reckless deeds the blessed gods love not; they honor justice and men's upright deeds. Why, evil-minded cruel men who land on a foreign shore, and Zeus allows them plunder, so that they sail back home with well-filled ships —even on the hearts of such falls a great fear of heavenly wrath."

The principle here stated is not limited in application to the pirates of the Mediterranean of ten centuries before Christ, but is general and applies as well to ultra-modern imperialists who wage war for commercial or financial advantage. Apollo through Homer, and Homer through Eumaeus, here breathe a spirit higher than that of the Homeric age, a universal spirit that will find the fullest expression in the Beatitudes, eight centuries later, and that often found expression in the Prophets.

Historically, this speech is seen to be very important. Odysseus, assenting to Eumaeus, became the ideal king for the coming generation and waged no more wars for plunder; also, shortly after Homer the tendency to piracy was checked. This Peace Movement,

if we may call it so, was later strengthened by the formation of the Delian League, a league of the Ionian cities of Asia Minor, the Grecian islands of the Aegean Sea, and Athens, named *Delian* in honor of Apollo, whose most sacred temple was then at Delos. Homer might well give Eumaeus the Swineherd higher honor than any other person in his story, for justice and peace among nations are the New Law that he is pleading for—the poet becomes so moved with enthusiasm telling the incident of Eumaeus that he abandons the narrative form and breaks dramatically into direct address as he proceeds: “Then, Swineherd Eumaeus, you answered him, and said.”

In later Greece, also, the character of Eumaeus was greatly reverenced—he was one of those herdsmen wiser than kings, whom the foremost nations of that age were giving ear to as their moral and religious teachers.

Some centuries previous to Homer, Moses had lived as a shepherd with the shepherd Jethro, from whom he learned much of the wisdom of life, before he was ready to lead his oppressed people out of their bondage in Egypt, to found a just state under a New Law higher than that of the Pharoah—he had chosen the cause of the people though he had been reared in the Pharoah’s household in luxury. So Zoroaster, the herdsman, was wiser than his Persian kings, and taught them and their people to build a juster State. So, shortly after Homer, Amos, the shepherd-prophet, was wiser than his king, and the moral voice of his people. In those centuries, the truth seems to have been breaking upon these foremost nations of the West that imperial despots had not been justified in their rule, but that Truth speaks through humbler men, good shepherds, good swineherds, good cowherds, as the case might be, all working men who wished to live in peace and establish justice among the people and among the nations. The dream was rising that a Prince of Peace might come—and the Persian Magi found him among the shepherds.

As every year the tribes of Israel met at Bethel to hold their sacred festival, so the Grecian cities of the Delian League began to hold a yearly festival at Delos in honor of Apollo—again we see a parallel, which indicates that the Greeks were probably considering their neighbors’ institutions before adopting their own. These Delian festivals gave expression and bent to the strong, sound, faith-inspired and very beautiful life of Apollonian Greece. Not only the men took part, but the women and children also, realizing doubtless that they could have such a life as Homer had pic-

tured only if they maintained their ideals against those of the East. Homer's good women had been sisters in spirit to the mothers of Israel, and their homes afforded mothers and daughters as well as fathers and sons an opportunity to lead life in much freedom, which the women of the East did not have.

An important historic fact that is very clear in Homer is that his good women, as Penelope, Arete, and Nausicaä, are not of the Eastern, but distinctly of the Western type, though perhaps more restricted than some of the women of Israel had been. In Israel, as early as 1296 B.C., when Greece was still under kings and before Troy had fallen, a Deborah could hold the office of judge and act as advisor on public policies and as a leader in battle, and a Jael had a literal as well as a figurative hand in bringing the war to a close when she lured the commander of the enemy, Sisera, into her tent and drove the nail into his brain as he slept. The Homeric women do not seem to have done such things, but they had considerable power and influence even in public life. Cassandra was a true prophetess to her people under Apollo, warning them of the punishment that the righteous gods would send upon them for their act, and in later Greece the pythoness of Apollo became an institution, her prophesying a factor in public as well as in private life.

Above all, the character and activities of Athene, as personified Wisdom, would show that Grecian women were not regarded in Eastern fashion, as lacking in mental, moral, or physical power and independence, witness the regard that Zeus pays to Athene and her successful personal combats with Aphrodite and Ares, both of whom she overthrows on the battlefield. She is a wise counsellor in heaven, as her worshippers, men, women, young men, and maidens, are on earth under her guidance. We may not always like her ways, particularly in the scene where she lures Hector to his death—the poet created her in the image of his age, when Jael also was greatly admired. Such a stratagem as hers was then regarded wise in war, as traps, ambushes, and all manner of deceit are still widely approved. But where Athene could rouse the world to war, and where she could take part in combat when that was necessary, her main activities were in the home. There she taught women to employ themselves with the loom and the distaff and to care for the clothing and other necessities of the household, and men and boys to conduct themselves wisely. In their homes, Homeric women were not secluded, as were the women of the East, but lived very much as women of Europe now do, in the social life of the family, taking part in the conversation and other activities. Queen Arete walked

unattended through the town, respected by all beholders, and she announced the decision on charities in the home when a suppliant made his appeal—that it was her custom to do so we learn from her daughter Nausicaä, when she told Odysseus how to approach her mother and gave him the needed clothing at the washing-pool. The conduct of this maid is the final and convincing proof that the Homeric woman was free and worthy of her freedom. Nausicaä is as free as any girl need be, while her ideal, Wisdom, Athene, is the extreme of independence, not exceeded by the modern bachelor girl.

In the old Delian festival, every member of the family took part, as is seen in the Homeric hymn to Apollo:

“There in thy honor, Apollo, the long-robed Ionians assemble with their children and their gracious dames. So often as they hold thy Festival, they celebrate thee, for thy joy, with boxing, and dancing and song. A man would say that they were strangers to death and to old age evermore, who should come to the Ionians thus gathered; for he would see the goodliness of all the people and would rejoice in his soul, beholding the men and the fairly cinctured women, and their swift ships, and their great wealth; and besides, that wonder of which the fame shall not perish, the maidens of Delos, hand-maidens of Apollo, the Far-Darter. First they hymn Apollo, then Leto and Artemis delighting in arrows; and then they sing the praise of heroes of yore and of women, and throw their spell over the tribes of men.”

That nation will be strong in which the maidens are taught to sing hymns praising the god of Justice, “the Far-Darter,” who shoots arrows of retribution to the farthest mark, and in which they sing also “praises of heroes of yore, and of women.” Songs at Delos must have included Homer’s songs of Odysseus and Penelope, Telemachus and Nausicaä, so these would continue to throw over the tribes of men their “spell,” Apollo’s inspiration to the high life, conveyed through his poet, Homer.

Such a popular festival as this of the Delian League, in praise of the god of the sun and joy in all of the good things that he gives to men through the arts, poetry, song, the dance, athletics, must promote not only fellowship, commerce, and art, but freer social institutions, a stronger tendency toward democracy in the State, and patriotism, the spirit which will safeguard the nation against attack from without. In spite of rivalries among themselves, and hegemonies, the united Grecian cities of the Delian League preserved Peace and fostered the ideals of Apollo as against those of Baal and Ashtaroth, or Istar, who were now encroaching and threatening the States of the West. The lines were drawn and an Asiatic League was formed in opposition to the Delian League,

comprised of cities along the coast of Asia Minor which held Asiatic ideals and served Baal and Istar. How much credit should be given to Homer for the Grecian ideals, and for the Delian League through which these were maintained against Asia? This old Delian League developed later into the Delian League in which Athens became the political and imperial leader.

The formation of these two leagues was a visible sign that war was on in the hearts and minds of the East and the West, and that the people on the frontier, at the lines of demarcation, were now conscious of holding fundamentally different ideals. The East was an oncoming tide, which was to be stemmed if at all by the tribes of Israel in Palestine or by the Greeks united in the Delian League—by these, battles of great importance in the world's history were to be lost or won in the course of the three centuries following Homer.

We know the sequel. Israel, sunk in corruption except for the small "remnant" that her prophets rallied, was to be destroyed as a nation and carried into captivity by Assyria and Babylon; the Ionian units of the Delian League failed to support each other when the Asiatic armies made their attacks, and the coast cities and the islands, one after the other, fell; only Athens was able to maintain her faith and keep her independence. The chances were hundreds to one against her, as they had been against Odysseus, but her hope was, like his, in the god of Justice because her cause was just. Athene was with her also, true Wisdom, "Wisdom in the scorn of consequence." She was strong with the greatest strength in the world, a great idea held with faith like that of a mustard seed: the idea that the god of Justice will help in what looks like hopeless straits. Her poet, Homer, had shown, as the Prophets of Israel had shown, the utter destruction of guilty men and nations and the salvation of those who lived the faith.

The East had begun encroaching before the time of Homer. In 876 B.C. an Assyrian army had penetrated to the Mediterranean Sea, laying Israel under contribution on the way. Israel was geographically near to the Ionian States, and it was easy for news to be carried from Israel to the Greeks of the Ionian cities, for the land route from Greece to Egypt passed over Palestine; and news was certain to be carried because Israel was the buffer-state, by whose fall the Ionian States would themselves be endangered. In this early period, Israel would naturally exercise a very powerful influence upon her younger and weaker neighbor, through her supe-

rior institutions, experience, learning, religion, and power, and this influence would be the stronger because of their common danger from the East. A few centuries later, when Israel had suffered the penalties of her corruption and Athens had reaped the reward of the Wisdom she had sown and the Justice she instituted, Athens would become a powerful influence upon restored Israel.

Following the Assyrian invasion, Israel fought a war with Damascus, also an Eastern State, and she came out of it with final success under King Ahab, who had strengthened his position by an alliance with Tyre, made by his taking to wife Jezebel, the daughter of the Tyrian king.

But now the East threatened Israel within her own borders through (1) the religion of Jezebel, whose gods were Baal and Ashtaroth, and (2) through her despotic methods of governing the people. King Ahab continued to support the Temple and the prophets of Jehovah, but he also built a temple where the queen might worship her Eastern gods and for the service of Baal he permitted hundreds of prophets of Baal to come into the land, who threatened the worship of the righteous God of the fathers.

How the Eastern queen took away the rights of the people is shown in the incident of Naboth's vineyard, which we will review briefly for purposes of comparison. Naboth was a humble subject of Ahab's, "humble," however, not in the sense of "cringing," as will be seen. He owned a small vineyard near the royal palace, Jezreel, and this Jezebel wanted for her garden of herbs. But Naboth refused to sell his land, and even to trade it for a better vineyard, for it had come to him from his father, and he loved it. To the king, he persistently replied, "The Lord forbid it me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee," a speech in which we see the former freedom of the people of Israel and the independence which they still felt under their kings. Naboth's refusal was not to end the matter. The spirit of the East spoke in Jezebel, and she said to Ahab, "Dost thou govern the Kingdom of Israel? I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth," and she summoned false witnesses and had Naboth tried and convicted on a charge of blaspheming God and the king. He was then stoned to death. Such events were very common in the ancient East, as today.

The prophet Elijah came forth against Ahab and Jezebel, with only the purpose of his righteous God to serve; and he appealed to the people:

"How long will ye halt between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him."

The people finally rose in response to Elijah and killed all of the prophets of Baal; not one remained in the land. The rage of Jezebel against him forced Elijah to flee for his life and live in hiding, but after the death of Naboth he came forth again, and rebuked the king in the sternest and most public manner:

"Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? Thus saith the Lord, in the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine . . . because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord. Behold, I will bring evil upon thee and will take away thy posterity."

Of Jezebel also he prophesied:

"The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the walls of Jezreel."

The fate that Elijah had prophesied came literally upon Ahab and Jezebel, and in 853 B. C. this baneful king and queen paid the penalty for the injustice they had done to their humble subject—the loss of their throne, the destruction of their house, and their lives. To use a Grecian expression, *Ἄτη, Ate, folly, judicial blindness*, had been their undoing; they were *ἀτηρός, baneful, driven to ruin*.

This is the very expression that Homer used for the folly and injustice of Menelaus and Agamemnon, when he called them *sons of Atreus*. Had the Ionian poet heard about Ahab and Jezebel and the danger that Israel had been in through them from the "false gods" of the East and the despotism of the East? Homer was himself of Ahab's generation, or of that just following . . . can it be that *Baal*, the Eastern war-god, is in a general and allegorical way Homer's *Ares*, the god of war, whom he shows as a perfectly despicable character, intriguing in secret with Aphrodite (the Eastern Ashtaroth or Istar), utterly without principle in his fighting, an abject coward who goes down in defeat when he is faced in combat by Wisdom, or even by the youngest of the Grecian warriors who has faith in his righteous cause? No temple was reared to Ares on Grecian soil; Zeus, though his father, reproaches Ares with loving wars and battle; no wise hero or heroine in Homer's epics pays Ares reverence; and Menelaus, the king, who is said to be "dear to Ares," is a "son of Atreus" and the worst man whom the poet shows on the Grecian side. It is not possible that Homer, who so loved Eumaeus and peace, in an age when Grecian kings and their sea-rovers were still profitting by piracy, should also love Ares and give him public honor. He shows Ares thoroughly beaten at the end of the Trojan War. . . . Is Homer not saying to his people in an allegorical way that the righteous gods of their fathers will help them in their wars against Ares if their cause is just? Is he

not facing them with the question whether Zeus, Wisdom and Justice shall be their god, or this false war-god? Is he not saying, in effect, what Elijah had said to Israel:

"How long will ye halt between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him."

only paraphrasing "the Lord" with "the righteous gods," and "Baal" with "Ares and Aphrodite"?

Homer shows Ares as so contemptible that any person who worshipped him would deserve defeat, and any person who was "dear to Ares," as Menelaus was, must be the antipodes of Eumaeus, not blessed as a peacemaker, but a man of violence and on the way to ruin. Was it not the final count against Menelaus as a man and a king that he was "dear to Ares," and not dear to Zeus, Athene and Apollo? . . . as if an Israelite had said of Ahab that he was "dear to Baal," but not dear to Jehovah?

Following this parallel in the cases of Ahab and Menelaus, we find on studying Menelaus that he is a much worse man than Ahab in various respects. Abroad, he has been a pirate who gained his wealth by despoiling cities with no high cause, while Ahab has fought on the defensive for his country; at home he conducts himself like a tyrant, or despot, where Ahab seems to have been kindly and indulgent to a fault. The incident where Telemachus visits Menelaus and Helen shows what reveals the sad story of this baneful king's queen, his servants, and his people. In a previous essay we have spoken of the tragic situation of Helen—she might well wish that she had died, for the happiest occasion offers her no joy or honor. That day, if ever, Menelaus should be in a happy humor, for the occasion is the marriage of their daughter and the wedding feast is being held, but he is in a savage mood and rebuffs her cruelly when she tries to please him. To his servant, also, he shows a harsh humor, and his speeches reveal his despotic treatment of his people.

An attendant enters to announce that strangers are arriving and to ask whether they shall be given entertainment for the night or shall be *sent on for someone else to entertain*. Night is approaching, and if they are sent on into the mountains, it is most likely that they will be attacked by wolves, so this suggestion is heartless, and wicked. To a Greek with right feeling, who knew the danger, it must seem shocking, and impious, for Zeus commanded kindness to strangers and wayfarers and was their special guardian—if these should die in the mountains Zeus would punish those who had

refused them entertainment. In the scene where Eumaeus welcomes and entertains the beggar (who is Odysseus in disguise), Homer shows by contrast how even beggars ought to be received and cared for—Eumaeus entertains the beggar in the most generous way and invites him to remain as long as he wishes to do so. This servant of Menelaus was quite the opposite of “noble Eumaeus” in every way, and he might well have been named *Try-Ill*, but bears a name more fitting than this, which fits his character exactly and is universally hated throughout the East; *Eteoneus*, derived from *ετης*, *citizen*, *ωνέομαι*, *I buy, I farm public taxes, I bribe*. The inference is clear. Addressing Citizen Tax-Farmer, Briber, by this name, Menelaus shows that he knows his character thoroughly and employs him nevertheless. We must conclude that he employs Eteoneus to farm his taxes and to bribe for him. It is clear, also, that this bad servant is not only a hand for the king, to serve him in evil-doing, but that he is an active prompter to bad acts when it seems that they will be of the least advantage. He has grown so bold as openly and in public to make this proposal to turn strangers from the door when night is coming on.

A wise king would now point out the wrong in this suggestion, and Menelaus does this, though rather from the point of view of his own interest than from a high principle. He says:

“Only through largely taking hospitality at strangers’ hands we two are here, and we must look to Zeus henceforth to give us rest from trouble. No! take the harness from the strangers’ horses and bring the men within to share the feast.”

The wisdom and moderation of this part of his speech is not maintained in the rest of it, however, for “deeply moved,” he says:

“You were no fool, Boethos’ son, Eteoneus, before this time, but now you are talking folly like a child.”

This statement is perfectly true, but in manner it is violent, and it is indiscreet. Such treatment as this will not open Eteoneus’ eyes to a higher view of life, as the talk in the Swineherd’s cottage would have done, and it will not fan the spark of his loyalty to his king. We may take it for granted that when the day of Menelaus’ trial comes this Tax-Farmer and Briber will not be standing devotedly at Menelaus’ side, as Eumaeus will stand with Odysseus, but that he will be hiding among those who seek their own safety, or will have gone over to the king’s enemies if that should seem to his interest. No one knows better than he the evil side of the king, there can be no ties of affection to bind him to this kind of a master, and neither

of them has high principles to guide him in life. In fact, if Eteoneus should adopt high principles, he could not in conscience serve Menelaus.

The approaching stranger happened to be Telemachus, and when Menelaus learned that this was Odysseus' son he was unrestrained in his praise of Odysseus. Here, again, his speech was an offense, for Apollo commanded *restraint in all things*. Menelaus shows no fine discrimination and appreciation of the excellencies of his friend Odysseus, such as Homer shows in drawing his character, and we suspect that there really was not much friendship between them, for the gods that they served were too different—serving the same god is a stronger bond of attachment than being born of one blood. Speaking of Odysseus, Menelaus exclaims:

"I used to say that I should greet his coming more than that of all the other Argives,"

thereby doing something of injustice to his other friends, one must believe. He proceeds to tell, too warmly, that he would delight to bestow upon his favorite very rich possessions, some of which he ought not to consider his own to give away:

"I would have assigned to him a city, would here have built his house, and I would have brought him out of Ithaca—him and his goods, his child and all his people—*clearing its dwellers from some single city that lies within my neighborhood and owns me for its lord*."

King Ahab had weakly permitted his wife to clear one man *from his land* after that man had refused repeatedly to take what looked to Ahab like a just and generous offer, and Jezebel urged her personal need of that particular piece of land, but here Menelaus proposes to *clear out the people of a whole city*, just to show his regard for a favorite who has not even requested this favor, apparently without compensation to the people dispossessed and without proposing to consult their feeling in the matter. Would they not probably object to being *cleared out*, and reply to Menelaus, as Naboth had replied to Ahab:

"The Lord forbid it us that we should give up the inheritance of our fathers unto thee"?

On his part, Odysseus would certainly think twice before he accepted such an offer as Menelaus here proposes, giving up his little independent kingdom for rich dependence on such a king. If he did accept, he soon would rue the day, for out of hand a king's favor can be withdrawn as summarily as it has been bestowed, and to please a new favorite, the former favorite is likely to be "cleared

out" with as little consideration as his predecessors were shown. No Eastern despot could be more harsh and autocratic than Menelaus as he appears in this incident. The poet reveals the instant, and the future immanent in it. Ahab's throne, his life, and the succession of his house were the retribution he paid for taking the land of Naboth: will this *baneful* and *fated* Menelaus pay less of a penalty if he dispossess his people?

False gods and unwise and unjust kings are shown in Homer's poems, as in the sacred books of Israel for the period in which Elijah and Homer lived, we must here admit. If the exact date and contemporary events of Homer could be discovered, they might throw a light upon his myths which would show us other moral and religious values. Perhaps a rumor of a new invasion from the East had reached him; perhaps he saw that some of the Grecian women were weeping for Adonis, the mortal lover of Aphrodite, while they turned from the altars of Athene and Apollo, as women of Israel wept for Tammuz, dishonoring the righteous God of their fathers. It seems clear that the poet's purpose was to strengthen his peoples' faith in Wisdom and Justice, and to weaken the hold of all that is ignoble, to body forth the ideals of the West as their best protection against those of the corrupted East. If his purpose was high and serious, he succeeded notably, for the Greeks themselves credited him with having named their gods and given them their attributes, and Solon molded their public policy in accordance with the Wisdom and Justice which Homer had taught them to trust.

The love of Wisdom and Justice, which Homer had strengthened, bore noble fruits in the course of the generation following him, besides those that have been noted. In 750 B.C. occurred the first captivity of Israel; in 753 B.C. Athens had deposed her kings. This decade, then, marks a turning point in the decline of Israel and in the rise of the Athenian democracy.

Where Homer presents a parallel to Elijah in his choice of a theme and his attitude toward the Eastern gods and despots, so later Apollonian Greeks of the Delian League present parallels to the later Prophets. In 722 Israel was taken captive the second time and her people were enslaved; in 588 B.C., Jerusalem was taken, the city utterly destroyed and the people carried to slavery in Babylon. Attacks on the States of the Delian League now followed, with unvarying success by the East, until Athens turned the tide at Marathon in 490 B.C., where she is rightly credited with having saved the Western world. Throughout this period Homer's spirit had been marching on to victory after victory in the purification of the

State and in the development of the Athenian Constitution, without which the miracle of Athenian victory over Persia would have been impossible—that Constitution which is one of the noblest works of the human race, wise and just beyond that of any other democracy, and the foundation on which could be built the works of art and intellect that characterized the Golden Age. Throughout the period between Homer and Pericles the poems of Homer were the sacred books of the Athenians, sung at religious festivals, presented on public occasions, put into dramatic form for the religious stage, and made the subject of careful study by the young.

The internal transformation of the Grecian States into democracies, toward which we found strong tendencies in Homer's poems, made steady progress. While Israel was going down, in 753 B.C., as we have said, the question of royal authority was settled in Athens by a decree of the Council that thereafter kings should rule for a period of only ten years, and shortly after that they were shorn of their military power, the Council alleging that they were not capable of command and appointing a military leader to act under the Council . . . an Agamemnon would not again be able to give rash and dangerous orders to the army before he had discussed them with the Council, and his baneful and ruinous rule would last for ten years at the longest, during which the Council would continue to limit him at every turn. A further important change for the better was made in the Athenian Constitution when an archon was chosen by the Council to take special charge of the interests of widows and orphans—to us who have Homer in mind, these will be seen as developments felt to be needed at that time, but a result also of the need of such as Penelope and Telemachus, as Homer had shown them. The discussion of a purely ideal case prepares the mind and heart to react rightly when an actual case occurs.

This limitation of royal prerogatives, ending in the abolition of the kingly office, and this first reconstruction of the Athenian Constitution in the eighth century before Christ, and immediately following Homer, were contemporary with great events and great prophets in Israel. The times were anxious, and the evils that should be corrected were denounced by great and earnest men. Fortunately, Wisdom was prevailing in Athens and with little or no violence changes were being made for the better as needed to approximate justice; but in Israel, for the most part, high and low had fallen into evil ways and the call of the prophets to purification was not heeded. Injustice continued to prevail. This was the case

when the prophet Amos began his mission at Bethel, in 760 B. C., seven years before the abolition of kings in Athens.

The Israelitish League of Tribes was holding its festival in honor of Jehovah in 760 B. C., with carousal as had come to be their bad custom of late years, this year with extreme abandon, for it was an occasion of peace with victory and Damascus had been defeated again. Pride and pomp and luxury were in full display, the prosperous were elated with a happy feeling that God was on their side, though they had not heeded the voice of Justice, and the poor were poor as never before. It was now that Amos, the shepherd, thundered forth the wrath of Jehovah in a prophecy that took the form of a dirge. In the name of the Lord, he threatened the revellers at Bethel that unless they repented they would be delivered to defeat and slavery for the sins of the rich against the poor . . . the Assyrian army had recently penetrated to Lebanon. . . .

"Thus saith the Lord, for three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof, because they have despised the law of the Lord, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err after that which their fathers have walked:

"I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.

"This saith the Lord; for three transgressions of Israel and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have sold the righteous for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes."

The charges that Amos makes are definite, that the rich have profiteered in foodstuffs and manipulated the money market, the age-old methods of enriching the rich and "making the poor of the land to fail":

"Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail.

"Saying, when will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the Sabbath, that we may sell wheat, *making the ephah small and the shekel great* and falsifying the balances of deceit?"

The only hope that the prophet holds out to the nation is in its purification:

"Let Judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream . . .

"Hate the evil and love the good, and establish justice in the gate. . . ."

This would be wisdom, and would still save the nation. In his denunciation Amos names the king by name:

"The high places of Israel shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against Jeroboam with the sword."

Under this denunciation the king did not try to silence the prophet with blows, and he did not imprison him, as has been com-

monly done with unwelcome prophets, and as Jeremiah was beaten and imprisoned for foretelling his country's defeat; but Amaziah, a sycophantic priest who was an adherent of the king's, tried to silence Amos:

Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, went to Jeroboam, king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words.

For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of the land.

Speaking to Amos, Amaziah advised him sarcastically to go elsewhere with his prophesying:

Also Amaziah said to Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thou away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread and prophesy there. But prophesy not any more at Bethel, for it is the king's chapel and it is the king's court.

But Amos did not yield to the sycophantic priest, and repeated his prophecy with added emphasis:

Then answered Amos and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit.

But the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.

Now, therefore, hear thou the word of the Lord: Thou sayest, prophesy not against Israel and drop not thy word against the house of Isaac.

Therefore, thus saith the Lord: Thy wife shall be an harlot, and thy sons and daughters shall fall by the sword; and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land: and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of this land."

Of the Prophets, Amos is in some respects of the greatest value to our study of Homer's moral and religious meaning, and his political tendencies, both those which we have seen in his epics and those which resulted later from the worship of Wisdom and Justice that he inspired. We note that Amos was a poor man and a herdsman, as Eumeus was in the *Odyssey*, and that both had lived nearer to God as they tended their flocks than the men in the courts and the cities lived—we surmise that Thersites was not only a common man, but a goatherd of Argos, a man of the Mountain. In Athens, the protest from the *Mountain* was to continue, gathering strength, until in 594 it prevailed over the *Plain* in the Code of Solon, which we shall consider later.

Contemporary with Amos, Hosea (785-725 B. C.) pled with Israel to stop polluting herself by the practice of usury; and, following Amos, Micah (745-725 B. C.) and Isaiah (750-695 B. C.) denounced the corruption by mammon of kings, judges, priests, and

prophets. Both of these prophets foretold defeat of their country and both looked beyond defeat to a final purification and to the coming of peace:

Thy princes are rebellious and companions of thieves: everyone loveth gifts and followeth after rewards; they judge not the cause of the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.

The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money. . . .

Therefore, shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field and Jerusalem shall become heaps. . . .

And I will turn my hand upon thee and purely purge away thy dross. . . .

And I will restore thy judges as at the first and thy counsellors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city.

These prophets looked also to the coming of a Prince of Peace:

And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

The problems that were faced by Israel and by the Greeks of this period were clearly parallel, and with Wisdom and Justice they might have been solved by both of those foremost nations of ancient history. But there the parallel stops. Except for a small "remnant" the corrupted people of Israel did not rise in response to their prophets. Hosea's reproaches that they had sold themselves to usury went unheeded; the warnings of Amos met no response; no changes for the better were made; and the nation met the defeat that the prophets had foretold. In 750 Judah was captured and in 722 she was destroyed as a nation; Jerusalem was destroyed in 588, her people carried away as slaves to Babylon. In Athens, meanwhile, kings were deposed, and the first less effective period of reconstruction was followed by a very effective reconstruction under Solon, who was elected Archon and Legislator for Athens in 594, six years before the fall of Jerusalem.

Before Solon, Athens was still far from a democracy. Though she had deposed her kings and appointed archons, she was an oligarchy, controlled by nobles and rich men to their class advantage. Those who spoke against abuses were being imprisoned or put to death, courts favored the rich, land was monopolized, the people were very poor and many of them had been sold into slavery as debtors, rates of interest were exorbitant, and money was controlled by a small class of private citizens who made high profits at

the expense of the community, as bankers do in modern times. Athens was on the brink of civil war, the men of the Mountain rising against those of the Plain, who were mainly business men.

Solon was chosen Archon and Legislator because he had come to be known as the "Just," and he justified the confidence of those who turned to him, as is evident in his code, from which modern nations have much to learn:

(1) He repealed the laws by which men had been imprisoned for political reasons and set political prisoners free.

(2) Courts had been favoring the rich—he reformed them in such a way as to give judges a strong personal reason for judging justly. Aristotle considered this reform of the Courts the measure by which Athens became a democracy.

(3) Land had been monopolized in Attica, and much of it was heavily mortgaged at an extortionate interest. Solon set a limit to the amount of land that any one person might hold and cancelled the "mortgages" where extortionate interest had been collected from the people. He called this "the lightening of burdens," where others called it "repudiation," for he viewed the situation from the angle of the peoples' rights and the wrong that had been done them. Grote says that he doubtless adopted this measure with the thought that it was right for the class which had profitted greatly and unjustly as a class to suffer something of loss in the readjustment. In this cancelling of mortgages, Solon sacrificed his own fortune along with those of the rest of the mortgage-holding class. His action in this matter is the more creditable to him because he rose above the prejudice of his own class—he traced his own ancestry to the Kings.

(4) Perhaps the most important thing that Solon did was to nationalize money; that is, to take it from the small class of men who were profitting privately by coining, exchanging and controling it in amount, as bankers are profitting in modern times by these operations. Solon put all of these operations in charge of the national treasury and turned all profits on them into the national treasury, to be used for the nation's needs. This broke the "money power" of that day and prevented the formation of a class of financiers who could dominate Athens as modern financiers dominate the modern world, and it also filled the Athenian treasury so that Athens was able to spend richly for public purposes, paying new issues out for public works—there was no problem of unemployment in Athens with such a money system. Also, without laying taxes on her people, she could build the ships to defend Greece and the West against the attack of the Persian Empire which was about to be made. If Persia had made her attack before Solon, she would have found Athens an easy prey, her discontented and poverty-stricken people rising against the rich who oppressed them, the nation as a whole poor and weak. On the foundation laid by Solon in Justice, Athens became very strong, and the spirit of her people rose to the new life that was opened to them. Art and thought were stimulated as at no other period of history. The rich did not lose opportunity under the laws of Solon, and all gained opportunity to distinguish themselves in other ways than by money-juggling, in philosophy, in poetry, sculpture, architecture, drama, and statesmanship—Athenian statesmen considered the people rather than some moneyed group of citizens.

With such conditions as this code gave, it is not surprising that little Athens became the wonder of the ancient world and that her citizens produced works that have never been surpassed. If Israel had heeded her prophets and had empowered a Solon to correct the wrongs that the prophets had pointed out, breaking the money power which had corrupted her kings, her priests, her prophets, and her profiteers, as Hosea, Amos, Micah, and Isaiah testify that they were corrupted—it is useless to speculate on what she might have become in history. As it was, she became a perfect example of the ruin of nations so unwise as to permit injustice to continue, a warning which they must heed, or disregard at their peril. The parallels that we have observed leave little doubt that her peril had much to do, from Homer to Solon, with the thought, institutions, and policy of the Greeks. Perhaps they learned from her failures.

If a Solon had guided Athens always in Wisdom and Justice, she might not have declined. Folly led to her defeat after she had undertaken leadership among the States of Greece, used their funds for her own adornment, permitted slave-driving and heavy profiteering in wars, and in various other bad ways lost the spirit that would have saved her, that had first made her great. Her rich men came to care more for their riches than they did for their country and urged her into war after war to add to their profits, though always posing as patriots; and the admirals of her fleet sold out her interests for their own. Finally, when Rome came, on her career of conquest, the richest of the Athenians welcomed the Empire and fought for her because the Romans had promised them support in suppressing slave-insurrections and in conducting business abroad. Ferrero says:

Everywhere, even in the most distant nations, powerful minorities formed, that worked for Rome against old separating forces, against old traditions and local patriotisms alike. The wealthy classes were in a way wholly favorable to Rome.

So Athens passed from the spirit of Homer to that of degenerate Rome of the Caesars and Vergil. The imperial gods of devotion were now Ares, who was Roman Mars, and Aphrodite, Roman Venus. In turn, Athens became soon another perfect example of the nation so unwise as to permit injustice—a warning which others may heed, which they disregarded at their peril. Like uncorrupted Israel of Moses and the Prophets, the uncorrupted Athens of Homer's Wisdom and Justice is an inspiration and hope to the world; like Israel in her decay, she became a shaking of the head to the nations.



















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